YOUTUBE SECRETS

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO GROWING YOUR FOLLOWING AND MAKING MONEY AS A VIDEO INFLUENCER

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ISBN: 978-1-5445-1182-5

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This book is dedicated to the Video Influencers' community. Your stories of sacrifice, hustle, and persistence inspire and encourage us every day. Together we can impact the world through the power of online video, and we are grateful to be on the journey with you.

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Thanks for the support!

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INTRODUCTION

When most people think of YouTube, they still think of cat videos, viral memes, and homemade videos. In reality, there is a secret community of people on YouTube who are turning their creativity into careers, amassing huge followings, and creating lives on their own terms.

CNBC[1] recently shared the story of Karina Garcia, known as the internet's Slime Queen. In less than three years, the twenty-three-year-old turned her one-time hobby posting do-it-yourself (DIY) slime videos into a full-time career and went from waitressing to making millions. While her story might have seemed crazy a decade ago, it's becoming more and more common.

In 2012, according to an article in Adweek.com,[2] thousands of people were making six-figure incomes from their YouTube channels through advertising revenue alone, but the YouTube Creator Blog[3] just revealed that the number of channels making over six figures is up 40 percent, year over year. Conservative estimates lead us to believe there are now tens of thousands of channels making six-figure incomes from ad revenue alone, not including other forms of income. According to the American Marketing Association,[4] digital ad spending will beat television ad spending for the first time ever in 2018, with nearly $160 billion pouring into this arena, creating a ton of new opportunity for influencers.

By the way, ad revenue is only one of the ways YouTube creators are monetizing their content. Later in this book, we'll share nine other ways you can make money through online video. It's a revolution. You may be hearing about it for the first time, but this is a very real opportunity. Regular, everyday people from all walks of life are discovering the power of building influence, creating income, and making a massive impact on YouTube by creating content based off their hobbies, passions, and professional lives.

Laura Vitale's passion is cooking, and she always dreamed of writing a cookbook. She started her YouTube channel shortly after quitting a restaurant job, making videos with her husband in her own kitchen. Seven years later, she had grown her channel to such an extent that she landed a

position on the Food Network as a regular host and got a book deal for her cookbook. She's now a bestselling author, due in large part to amassing 3 million subscribers on her channel, and she has become one of the most highly recognized food personalities on the platform.

John Kohler, a passionate gardener, has one of the most highly watched gardening shows on YouTube, *Growing Your Greens*. The first video he uploaded in 2009 was shot in one take, wasn't high definition, had no editing, and he wasn't even in the shot, but he had an obvious passion for gardening. Fourteen hundred videos later, with a total of 67 million views and half a million subscribers, he's a little savvier about video, but more importantly, he is using his channel to grow his core business, selling juicing machines.

Then there's Alejandro Reyes, a dad who vlogs with his wife and two daughters. All they do is record videos as they go about their daily lives, but, in a few short years, they were able to create a six-figure income from sponsorship opportunities despite having a relatively small audience.

We're not saying everyone is going to become wealthy on YouTube. For some people, that might not even be their ambition. What's exciting is how people are taking their passions and hobbies and using them to create communities, connect with like-minded people, and make some money for themselves and their families.

Heather Torres is a great example of this. A homeschool mom with two kids, she started a homeschooling channel to share tips with other parents. After a year of posting videos in her spare time, her channel grew to over 8,000 subscribers, and her videos have been viewed over a quarter of a million times. As a result, she has created a side income for her family and opened many doors of opportunity.

Now, you might be thinking, "These people started early. It's too late now. YouTube is crowded and there's too much competition." That's simply not the case. A recent article from the Huffington Post[5] revealed that 3 to 5 billion new consumers will be coming online between now and 2020, producing the greatest surge in the global economy we've ever seen. That

means now is a great time to get started on YouTube. Don’t put it off any longer.

Additionally, you might assume all these successful YouTubers had startup funding. Maybe you lack the money to buy the kind of expensive equipment people use to make professional TV shows. The good news is you don’t need any of that. All the equipment you need to make compelling YouTube content is in your pocket right now, contained in your smartphone. Your phone can create and upload HD video, and that’s all you need to get started.

Some people fear they don’t have the talent to create quality YouTube content, but talent is not the number one requirement on YouTube. Things like passion, excitement, fun, information, education, and answering people’s questions are far more important. The most successful creators today aren’t talented in the ways that Hollywood stars are. In fact, many of them are introverts in regular life, but they have a passion for the content they create. That’s the real secret of YouTube. If you’re passionate enough to help others and excited enough to keep their interest, you’re ready.

Successful influencers on YouTube are just average, everyday folks who care about something and have developed some skill or knowledge about a subject, whether it’s fitness, faith, or de-cluttering a home. Any kind of interest or hobby can become valuable content without the need for fancy editing or an ultra-talented creator.

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WHY VIDEO?

In general, we all prefer to connect and do business with people we know, like, and trust. The problem with connecting online is that it's harder to look someone in the eye, have a real conversation with them, and gauge their facial expressions. This is particularly true with blogging but also holds true for audio content. That's one reason we believe video is absolutely the best way to communicate any message.

Through video, it's much easier for an audience to get to know and trust you. The most successful YouTubers have regular viewers who feel like they have developed a friendship with them. Only video engages people on that level.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but digital marketing expert James McQuivey of Forrester Research[6] estimates that a single minute of video content is equivalent to 1.8 million words. For anyone who has a message, dream, business, brand, or something they want to get out to the world, video is the most effective way to do it.

Video is also growing like crazy. Almost every social media platform has adopted video as its preferred medium. Can you think of a single social media platform that hasn't already incorporated video? Recent stats[7] show that 55 percent of people watch videos online every day. Small Business Trends[8] revealed that by 2019, global consumer internet video traffic will account for 80 percent of all consumer internet traffic.

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WHY YOUTUBE?

Why is YouTube the best video platform for creating impact? Simple: it's the second largest search engine, second only to Google, and recent stats[9] reveal that over 1 billion hours of content are being watched on YouTube every day. Also, Google owns YouTube, so search functionality is at its heart. That makes YouTube distinct from other social media platforms. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat aren't search engines, so YouTube provides a distinct advantage in getting discovered and building your influence.

Whatever your business, brand, interest, or hobby, a target audience is looking for your content on YouTube. Maybe it's someone seeking advice on growing healthier tomatoes, or applying smoky eye shadow, or saving money on taxes. YouTube gives you immediate access to a worldwide audience. Susan Wojcicki,[10] YouTube's CEO, recently said that the platform has over 1.5 billion logged-in monthly users who spend over an hour a day watching YouTube videos. That's three times the population of North America.

YouTube is also free. Plenty of tools will help you create content, but YouTube has no financial barrier. You can upload unlimited HD and even 4K content to your channel at no cost. Think about how much harder it was to get a message out to a worldwide audience twenty years ago. Back then, you probably would have had to buy television air time, which would have cost a fortune. YouTube has completely leveled the playing field. An average person with a smartphone can reach the whole world on a platform packed with features. Don't take how amazing this is for granted. You have access to one of the greatest opportunities for outreach in history.

YouTube also pays well. In our experience, if you want to monetize your video content, YouTube provides the most lucrative opportunity. The most obvious means of making money is through ad revenue, which Google shares with content creators, but that's not the only way to profit. Brands routinely pay to have their products featured on YouTube because they trust the platform. Brand sponsorship, in fact, is one of your channel's biggest monetary opportunities.

No other social media network offers such easy revenue-sharing, certainly not with YouTube's quality or infrastructure. Every day, more and more people are building influential and lucrative channels. In 2010, YouTube's fifth birthday,[11] there were only five channels that had one million subscribers. Fast-forward to today, and there are thousands. The number continues to grow. According to a recent stat from Think with Google,[12] there are 75 percent more channels with over a million subscribers this year compared to last year. It might astound you to learn that so many people have turned their channels into real jobs and full-time careers, but it's happening right now.

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OUR BEGINNINGS

You might be asking yourself, “Who are Sean and Benji, and what makes them experts on YouTube? Why should I listen to them?” When we first met almost a decade ago, we both already had a few years’ experience on YouTube, but we were also at the lowest points of our financial lives. In the years that followed, as a result of the opportunities provided by YouTube, we were able to create full-time incomes and build thriving seven-figure businesses off our individual efforts. Benji has been able to raise a million dollars for charity through live broadcast video and built an income off Google AdSense and brand sponsorships through vlogging. Sean has helped numerous speakers, churches, and small businesses use YouTube and video to achieve successful results. He also created a six-figure income from affiliates marketing alone.

One day, three years ago, as we were discussing some of the insights and lessons we had learned from building our individual channels, we had the idea to share this information with the rest of the world. This book is a result of that decision. Before writing it, we wanted to test and prove the principles we were going to be teaching, which led to the creation of our Video Influencers channel. We managed to grow Video Influencers to over 10 million views and 250,000 subscribers before publishing our book.

Our stories bear many similarities to the success stories of other YouTubers. We were regular people with a passion for something, and by consistently delivering value on that subject, we built an audience. Our success didn’t come from being super-talented. It came from sharing basic principles that anybody can follow to build influence, income, and impact with online videos.

In this book, we will reveal the paths, principles, tips, steps, and strategies that anybody can use to reach an audience, make money, build a business or personal brand, and share their message with the world. The lessons we’ve learned come from our twenty years of combined experience on the platform, as well as more than a hundred interviews we’ve conducted with successful YouTubers from all walks of life.

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WHAT TO EXPECT

So where are we headed? In the first section of this book, we want to share with you the seven-step strategy that has worked for us since 2008. All the advice we give will be practical, with nothing beyond the average person's comprehension or skill level. Though things change over time, our basic seven-step framework for YouTube success remains timeless.

One of the biggest mistakes people make when trying to build their influence online comes from focusing on short-term tactics that aren't part of an overall cohesive strategy, so in section two, we'll cover specific tactics and secret hacks that are working right now to grow influence on YouTube.

Finally, in the appendix, we will share some of the best resources out there, including videos, books, websites, tools, and apps, and we'll answer some of the most frequently asked questions we get about YouTube and online video. Topics covered will include when and how to scale your business, grow your team, pick the right camera, deal with haters and trolls, and advice for becoming a daily vlogger.

Here's our suggestion for getting the most out of this book: Read it through one time just to wrap your head around the cohesive strategy we lay out. Then come back to it as a reference while growing your YouTube channel, digging in deeper on specific points. We have included links to videos for further training, so you can take your education to the next level.

We believe that anyone can create a part-time or even full-time income with YouTube, and expand their reach, build a community, and get product or brand awareness through the strategies we provide. Maybe you just want more exposure for a cause, charity, or nonprofit, or maybe you're trying to create a community around a hobby. Is your dream to become financially free? Maybe you dream of becoming a superstar. Whatever the case, we'll give you the techniques you need to make it happen. In concrete terms, this means more subscribers, more followers, and more income.

We can’t promise that you’ll become a famous YouTuber, but we can share every principle we’ve utilized to create our own success, as well as the secrets we’ve learned from some of today’s top YouTube creators. By the end of this book, you will have a comprehensive yet simple guide for creating success for yourself, if you’re willing to put in the effort.

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PART ONE

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STRATEGY: THE SEVEN C’S

In this section, we’re going to share the essential building blocks for creating a successful YouTube channel. We call them The Seven C’s: **Courage**, **Clarity**, **Channel**, **Content**, **Community**, **Cash**, and **Consistency**. You’ll learn everything from finding the inspiration for the idea behind your channel to the nuts and bolts of creating and releasing your content. In each chapter, we’ll feature real YouTubers and share stories from Video Influencers interviews. Through these examples, you’ll see what the building blocks look like when put into practice, so that you can also begin to put them in place to create your own success story.

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CHAPTER 1

COURAGE: IGNITE PASSION AND TRANSCEND FEAR

You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great.

ZIG ZIGLAR

What keeps people from getting started on YouTube? Chiefly fear, that deer-in-the-headlights feeling. What are they afraid of? Being judged; getting hate comments and negativity; putting effort into something and not getting any return.

The quickest way to get beyond the fear is to simply get started. Just go for it. Some of the fears are valid. You probably will get negativity and trolling, so prepare yourself mentally for that reality. Ultimately, you just have to go through with it, because not starting at all is worse than failure.

Once upon a time, Benji agreed to go skydiving if he raised a certain amount of money for his annual Dancember charity event. He'd never been skydiving before, so he was taking a risk. Lo and behold, the money was raised, so we both set off for Snohomish, Washington, and climbed into a small prop plane together.

We were shocked at how fast the little plane climbed. Once we achieved altitude, the instructor opened the door, and bodies just started dropping out of the plane one after the other. Needless to say, we were terrified. What if something went wrong? What if our chutes didn't open?

As we stood there in the plane, petrified, the instructor reminded us that, at the end of the day, there's no jumping out of a plane halfway. It's all or nothing. Benji went first. Seeing him jump didn't build Sean's confidence. If anything, he got even more scared watching Benji fall away from the plane, but the only way to deal with the fear was to join him.

Jumping out of a plane is intense. You get flipped around and spin, but eventually the parachute opens. Once that happens, the fear goes away. Ultimately, we realized everything was going to be okay, and we were thankful we'd gone through with it.

The YouTube experience feels similar. The only way to overcome all those initial fears and anxieties is to go through with it. It's the old Nike cliché: just do it. Or, as the old saying goes: "Courage is not the absence of fear; it's the willingness to act despite the fear."

You might sound awkward on camera initially. Some people will post negative comments. You have a lot to learn. All these things are true, so make up your mind to push through them. At one point, every single person now on YouTube was brand new, had never done it before, and had no subscribers. Every person on social media started at zero, but they summoned their courage and started posting and uploading content. That's what we did in the beginning. And that's what you have to do.

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FIND YOUR “WHY”

Tapping into your “why” can help you overcome your fears. Simon Sinek writes in his well-known book, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, “People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.” Create a strong reason for being on YouTube. Who do you want to inspire, encourage, educate, or help with your products and services? Who are the people you want to entertain? Figure that out and keep those people front and center. This will help you get over yourself. Motive is the root word of motivation: find a motive that is bigger than all the challenges it’ll take to create your channel.

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CULTIVATE MENTAL PREPARATION

Cultivating mental preparation is critical. If you're afraid you might get hate comments, prepare yourself for them. Accept that it's going to happen. Negative comments happen to every single YouTube creator. The only way to stop them is to turn off comments altogether, but that hinders engagement. In a way, negative comments are part of the beauty of YouTube. People can agree with you, and people can disagree with you. The more polarizing your content, the more strongly people will voice their opinions. Accept that fact going in.

The fear never goes away completely, but it does diminish over time, especially as you get better. When Benji created his first video, a steak-cooking tutorial, he definitely had that "deer-in-the-headlights" look. Anxiety about what viewers would think prevented him from acting like his natural, personable self. Over time, as he realized there were people who enjoyed his content, valued his videos, and wanted more, he got more comfortable in front of the camera. Facing the fear has resulted in over 20 million views on his food channel alone.

If you need a little encouragement getting started, go and check out that first video and see how far Benji has come: TubeSecretsBook.com/FirstVideos

Sean started making videos for his church in 2003. At first, he was making a video every Wednesday for the youth group meeting, and then, after a year, he started making them for Sunday services as well. That was two videos a week, 104 videos a year, long before he got started on YouTube. As of today, he's created and posted well over 2,000 videos.

His confidence comes from the sheer repetition of creating content. Despite this, he still has days where's he anxious about how people will respond to a video. On those days, remembering his "why" helps him punch fear in the face and keep pressing forward.

Fear continues to affect even the most seasoned YouTubers. Benji has a good friend who owns a very successful business. He started uploading

videos on YouTube to promote the business, and over time, they helped grow it into a seven-figure success story. However, after a while, he stopped uploading videos. When Benji asked him why, he said the negativity and hate comments he received killed his passion and creativity, despite his business's continued growth.

We aren't sharing this story to demotivate you. We just want to reiterate the fact that seasoned content creators all deal with this. Benji's friend wasn't mentally prepared for it, so it eventually became more than he could handle.

Another good friend of ours, Kandie Johnson, has been on YouTube since 2009, and now has millions of followers. She likes to say that, when it comes to hate comments, there's not a lot of truth in them. In fact, when she responds to hate comments, she often gets an apology or a confession in return. Many of the "trolls" tell her they never expected her to read their comment, and often they admit that the hate stems from something they're going through in their own lives. Rarely does it contain any real substance or negative judgment of her.

It's no surprise to us that this is a huge challenge for new creators. That's why we titled the first chapter, "Courage." If you're passionate about something, love to help people, and know this is what you want to do, have the courage to look beyond the negativity and trolls to see the vast community of people who need and want your content.

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A COMMUNITY OF COURAGE

As you're summoning the courage to start your YouTube channel, it's important to surround yourself with a community of courage. Friends and family might not understand your vision for wanting to build influence on YouTube. In mild cases, they'll feel indifference or confusion about your passion. In more severe cases, they might actively mock you. Develop patience. Beyond that, surround yourself with individuals who support you and can sustain and motivate you through the ups and downs.

One reason we wrote this book and created our channel was so we could put together a supportive community of like-minded Video Influencers who understand YouTube culture. We encourage you to attend meet-ups and conferences, to connect with relevant communities and fellow video creators in Facebook groups or online forums. These are the people who will strengthen you when you're dealing with challenges.

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EXERCISE: YOUR MOTIVATION

As an exercise, think deeply about the following questions: What is your motivation for getting on YouTube? What do you hope to achieve through online video? What is your vision for your channel? Maybe you're hoping to create side income for your family. Maybe you want to reach out to people with a particular message. Or maybe you're trying to create a community of like-minded people centered on a specific hobby or issue.

Once you have your answers to those questions, we recommend writing them down and posting them somewhere you'll often see them so you can keep them in focus throughout your YouTube journey. Be crystal clear in your answers. Any time fear, doubt, or discouragement creeps up on you, take a look at those answers and remind yourself of what is most important. Go back to the answers so that you can push through and continue building your channel.

After all, what is the opportunity cost of not taking action right now? If you were to ask any YouTube creator if they wish they had started ten years earlier, almost all of them would say yes. Even if they've achieved success, they would tell you they wish they'd started sooner.

What will your ten-years-from-now-self think if you don't start now? Honestly, the best time to get started on YouTube was 2005, but the second-best time to get started is right now. What are you waiting for?

Myth #1: YouTube is too crowded.

Fact: The CEO of YouTube says the platform has over 1.5 billion logged-in monthly users watching at least an hour of videos a day. According to a Peter Diamandis[13] article in the *Huffington Post*, three to five billion new people will be coming online in the next few years. The audience for content continues to grow. There's room for you!

Myth #2: I don't have enough money.

Fact: These days, you can shoot, edit, and upload YouTube videos with the average smartphone, as long as you have an internet connection. Forget the fancy equipment and expensive gear.

Myth #3: I must be super-talented.

Fact: What matters most on YouTube is creating value for an audience with authenticity. If you can do that, you can find success. Start now and develop your skills as you go.

Myth #4: I don't have enough time.

Fact: In only a few hours a week, you can build a successful YouTube channel with consistent content.

Myth #5: I don't have enough connections.

Fact: It's not about connections. It's about content. All you have to do is create meaningful content and make it available.

Myth #6: Somebody already took my idea.

Fact: If someone is already doing what you want to do, that proves there's a market for it. McDonald's is not the only fast-food hamburger restaurant. There are hundreds of them. Why? Because people love burgers. You can find success with a subject even if others are already covering it.

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CHAPTER 2

CLARITY: START WITH THE END IN MIND

Start with the end outcome and work backwards to make your dream possible.

WAYNE DYER

When you go to the airport to pick up a plane ticket, you have a destination in mind. You don't walk up to the ticket counter and say, "I don't know. Just give me something and let me know." Unfortunately, this is how many people treat their YouTube channel. If you don't know where you're going, if you have no end in mind, you'll wind up somewhere you may not even want to be.

At some point on your journey, preferably at the very beginning, you must ask yourself, "What is my goal for being on YouTube?" Are you trying to drive sales to your business? Would you like to build an audience? Is your goal to become famous? Do you want to build a community around your favorite hobby? Do you simply want to use it as a creative outlet?

Define what you want to get out of YouTube and make that the foundation of your channel.

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THE THREE P'S

Something we hear a lot is, "I'm not really sure what my channel should be about or what my purpose on YouTube should be." If you're struggling to find an identity or purpose for your YouTube channel, we recommend building it at the intersection of your passion, your proficiency, and your profit.

In Michael Hyatt's book, *Living Forward*, he speaks on passion. "To discover what you're passionate about," he writes, "ask yourself what you would do for free." What is something that lights you up, that isn't a short-term interest but something you firmly believe in and care about? Think hard about this, because YouTube is a marathon, not a sprint. It's hard work. If you don't have deep love and passion for your channel, you will struggle to sustain your motivation through the ups and downs of building your influence on YouTube.

That being said, passion alone is not enough. You also need proficiency. John Kohler, a gardening YouTuber with almost half a million followers, is not only passionate about gardening—composting, organizing beds, juicing, and eating salads—but he has also developed his expertise on the subject over time. He has studied and learned all about it. Gardening is his life's work. He combines that passion and proficiency with a means to profit on YouTube, and he's thriving. John's YouTube channel is not about making money directly. Instead, he creates YouTube content to boost the buying audience for his juicing company.

There does have to be a market for your chosen subject. If you have passion and proficiency, but there isn't a market for it, all you have is a hobby. On the other hand, if you have knowledge about your subject, if there's a market for it, but you have no passion for the subject, you could wind up hating your own success.

If there is a market for it, and it's something you're passionate about, but you haven't developed proficiency yet, you probably won't have success. That doesn't mean you have to be the most knowledgeable person in the world. You don't have to be a world-renowned expert or have a degree in

the subject matter. Just share what you know, what you want other people to know, from your own authentic perspective, and grow from there.

When you combine passion, proficiency, and profit, you find your niche, and you’re one step closer to defining your end goal.

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FINDING YOUR ZONE

When we started Video Influencers, our number one goal was to help people discover the life-changing power of online video and YouTube. We asked ourselves, “How can we reach the most people possible?” Initially, we thought the best way to deliver this information was through a book, but then our vision expanded. So, we put the book on hold and started the Video Influencers YouTube channel and social media accounts, and we started publishing content.

We recognized that in order to impact people with our message, we needed to generate attention, awareness, and interest in this topic, so we set a goal of acquiring 100,000 subscribers on YouTube and 25,000 signed up for our email newsletter before we released the actual book. That way, when we launched this book, we would already have a community that had been impacted.

The channel grew beyond our wildest expectations. In fact, Video Influencers currently has over 300,000 subscribers on YouTube and 100,000 people signed up for our email newsletter. We are excited to see so many people discovering the massive opportunity in the online video space and taking action to build their influence and income.

We set our end goal at day zero and used reverse engineering to create the necessary steps to reach it. We used the three P’s—Passion, Proficiency, and Profit—did the hard work, built our audience, and the results followed.

Finding your zone means knowing the destination you want to reach so you can create your own roadmap to get there.

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CLARIFYING YOUR CONTENT

Erik Conover wanted to travel the world full time, but he couldn't afford it. He decided to get the money to travel by making YouTube videos. He already had filmmaking experience, so he used that skill to set his end goal in motion. He started with vlogs set around popular destinations in New York City (where he lived at the time), directing his videos at tourists. Then, he leveraged his new audience to go on trips, at first paying for the trips himself, but eventually traveling all the time with his YouTube revenue. Within two years, Erik grew his audience from zero to 300,000, and he now lives at the convergence of his passion and proficiency for travel.

When you have a clear focus like that, all of your actions drive you toward your end goal. Erik knew he didn't fit the typical nine-to-five job structure. He wanted to travel the world, and that's what he worked toward. He wasn't tempted to start a prank channel or do comedy sketches, because those things didn't drive him toward his end goal.

Now, he works with tour companies in countries all over the world, gets sponsored by Fortune 500 companies, and thrives as an influencer in the travel vlogger space. That's the power of clarifying your content.

Melanie Ham, who runs a quilting and crocheting channel, started out with the simple goal of making money from home while her husband was in the military. She was passionate about quilting and crocheting, and she had proficiency for them, though she'd never had any formal training. She decided to share what she knew online and grew an audience on YouTube. Now, she profits through YouTube advertising and selling her own digital products. The products she sells relate directly to her channel. Due to her clear focus, her end goal, and the intersection of the three P's, Melanie is now earning a significant income for her family from YouTube.

Once you know the niche of your YouTube channel and the direction you want to go, you must answer two big questions.

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WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

Who are the people your content is intended for? It's a mistake to say, "Everybody." In fact, that is a recipe for failure. If you try to reach everybody, you'll wind up reaching nobody. Target a specific group of people who share your interests, because they will engage with your content.

As in Erik Conover's case, your target audience might be people who love to watch travel vlogs. Those same people probably might not jump over to Melanie Ham's channel and watch tutorials on quilting. Both Erik and Melanie have a specific group of people they try to reach with every video they upload, which is what makes them both successful YouTubers.

When defining your target audience, ask yourself the following questions. How old are they? What are their hobbies? What are they interested in? Where do they come from? It sounds counterintuitive, but success on YouTube comes from a narrow focus. In fact, the smaller your target audience in the beginning, the faster you'll grow.

TEN QUESTIONS TO CLARIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

1. Are they female, male, or both?
2. How old are they? We recommend picking a range within five years of your own age.
3. What types of jobs or professions do they have?
4. What are their passions?
5. What are the top three websites they visit?
6. What are the top three Twitter, Instagram, and/or Facebook pages they follow?
7. Who are the top three influencers they might watch on YouTube?
8. What is their social circumstance? Married, single, kids, no kids, family, etc.
9. What is their yearly income range?
10. What products or services might they spend their discretionary income on? (Books, digital products, hobby expenses, etc.)

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WHAT WILL YOU OFFER THEM?

Once you've narrowed down your audience, you must decide what you're going to offer them. How often will you post videos? Once or twice a week? Once a month? Will you offer entertainment, education, inspiration, information, or motivation? Write your answers down on paper and think about them ahead of time.

If you had twenty seconds on an elevator to pitch your YouTube channel to a stranger, how would you pitch it? Tell them what they can expect, who the channel is for, why they should be interested, how it will add value to their life, and why it matters. Many YouTube channels never grow because their creators never take the time to define a target audience and come up with a clear purpose, value, or reason why people should care about their content.

Picture the person on the other side of your video. They go onto YouTube, open up a search query, and type something in. What are they looking for? What piece of content do they seek? What problem might they have that your YouTube channel could answer? Don't forget, YouTube is a search engine, first and foremost. You need to be clear in the questions you want to answer and the value you're giving the world. Putting yourself in the seat of the viewer will allow you to find the questions and become the answers.

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SUCCESS STORIES

Benji started his food channel because he's absolutely obsessed with cooking. If he wasn't sharing that passion on YouTube, he would be sharing it somewhere else. He's completely self-taught and has no formal culinary training—he's never even worked at a restaurant—but he's been cooking for most of his life, so, he has become quite proficient at it. He wanted to connect with other people who loved food and had a passion for cooking, and that's what inspired him to start his channel. Looking back, he's very glad he did, because his channel now has over 350,000 subscribers, and his recipe videos have been viewed over 20 million times.

To build his audience, he had to connect with others by creating content about popular recipes. He never officially classified himself as a "how-to" chef. Instead, he just started sharing great recipes, dove deeper into the food industry, and built his audience. Over time, he's managed to profit through advertising, brand deals, and more. Beyond that, his YouTube channel has provided him with amazing opportunities and experiences that he never would have had otherwise. Not long ago, he had one of those unique experiences at the nicest restaurant in Seattle, Canlis. Because he has developed a food reputation on YouTube, the owner of the restaurant came to the table and invited Benji and his wife down into the wine cellar. There, they were allowed to sabre a rare bottle of champagne and taste a rare scotch out of the barrel.

On another occasion, Benji was invited into the kitchen of a steakhouse to work on a legendary Montague Broiler. That's an experience normally reserved for famous chefs or Food Network stars.

It's not all about making money. You never know what opportunities, relationships, or experiences will come your way as a result of building your influence on YouTube. Beyond having clarity for your numbers, you should have clarity for the kind of lifestyle you want to create. Benji wanted a lifestyle built around his passion for food: free to shop, cook, and eat delicious food every day and make a living doing it.

Because Benji was both passionate and proficient, brands wanted to align with him to promote their products. He used this to his advantage, creating segments on his channel that directly correlated with sponsorships. For example, he has a segment titled “Tea Tuesday,” where he talks about his favorite teas. This segment has resulted in tons of free tea being sent to him.

For fifteen years, Sean has worked in video production. He has worked with, purchased, and researched cameras, in the process developing a real expertise. He’s completely self-taught, but he discovered he had an ability to speak naturally and authoritatively about cameras and video. Because of this, he became a source of advice and solutions for people who didn’t have hours to pore through manuals.

Sean turned his expertise into five-minute instructional videos on his YouTube channel *THiNK Media*. His aim was to help people find the best cameras and lighting and to teach video production. In the process, he managed to generate a full-time income using a range of revenue strategies, and today, THiNK Media has over 500,000 subscribers and his videos have been viewed 28 million times.

Cassie and Ricci of the channel “ToThe9s” are a great example of YouTubers who have benefited from clarity. When they started their channel back in 2014, they, like so many, only had a general interest in becoming influencers on the platform, but they soon focused their content around their passion for fashion. Though they’ve uploaded many different types of content over the years, they’ve maintained that fashion focus.

Two hundred videos, thirty million views, and 600,000 subscribers later, they’ve proved they are doing something right. In addition to making YouTube their full-time business, they also work with numerous fashion brands who sponsor their content. Recently, they partnered with Adidas Canada.

They have a fan-based Instagram account, @wearetothe9s, where they highlight photos submitted by their followers. By featuring fan content, they have been able to accrue over 80,000 followers on Instagram. Their laser focus and clarity in messaging has turned general viewers into raving fans.

When we first met Cassi and Ricci, their long-term goal was to travel for fashion. Their success has allowed them to achieve this goal through the support of hundreds of thousands of fans around the world. At this point, they might be tempted to try something different, to chase trends outside of fashion, but they maintain their clarity. Even their daily vlogs include picking out clothes and shopping at clothing stores.

Clarity is power, and a clear understanding of your end goal will help you reverse engineer the steps to get there. Once you know your end goal, have defined your audience, and set your focus, it’s time to start your journey on YouTube by creating your channel and building a home for your content.

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CHAPTER 3

CHANNEL: BUILDING A HOME FOR YOUR CONTENT

You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

WILL ROGERS

We both love parties. Who doesn't? There's nothing better than good food and spending time with family and friends. However, it can be stressful when you invite guests over for the first time, because you want to make a good first impression. So, what do you do?

You try to clean up any messes in the house, you decorate, and you make sure everything is ready to welcome your guests. In the same way, your YouTube channel serves as the home for your content, so make sure it welcomes your guests and makes a good impression.

The first step, of course, is creating your channel. This is where your content lives. It's like a website, and it's something you can personalize, customize, and make your own.

Another great way to think about your YouTube channel is to liken it to a TV channel. If you love sports, you've got ESPN. If you love comedy, you've got Comedy Central. If you love music and entertainment, you have MTV. We encourage you to think of your videos as the shows on your channel. Just like a TV channel, your YouTube channel should have some big idea that can be translated into a cohesive brand.

Anytime someone watches one of your videos, they consider subscribing to the whole channel. That’s the importance of your brand. Each video should give people a good idea of what the whole channel has to offer. The clearer the purpose and passion of your channel, the more likely you are to get subscribers.

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FIRST STEPS

The cool thing about starting a YouTube channel is that it's completely free. All you need is a Gmail address. If you don't already have one, create one. Then sign up for your YouTube channel. It's that easy.

You'll have to choose a name for your channel. If you're promoting a personal brand or your individual proficiency, the channel name could be as simple as your first and last name. Many successful channels have done this. Another option is to give your channel a creative brand or business name. The more descriptive it is, the better, so consider including the topic of your channel as part of the name. That makes it clearer to your target audience.

For example, *Nerd Fitness* is a fitness channel geared toward gamers, geeks, and nerds. It does a great job of combining both the topic and the target audience in the name. *Epic Meal Time* creates outrageous videos of people consuming things like 20,000 calorie, super-sized lasagnas. Their name fits their content perfectly.

Stuck on creating a channel name? Check out this video from Video Influencers: TubeSecretsBook.com/NameIdeas

It's a good idea to secure a website URL with your YouTube channel name, even if you don't use it right away. You could experience break-out success, so you want to have a URL ready to go. Similarly, make sure the social media handles with your channel name are available. If so, claim them in the beginning before anyone else does.

When we came up with the name Video Influencers, we checked to make sure the URL was available and purchased it. Then we went to Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, our main social media platforms, and secured our account name on those platforms as well.

What if your URL or social media handles of choice aren't available? Don't get stuck here. It doesn't mean you shouldn't go with that channel name. Just pick the closest thing you can get and don't worry about it. For

example, we couldn’t get @VideoInfluencers as a Twitter handle because it was one character too long, so we chose @VideoInfluencer instead. It hasn’t hurt our success, and it won’t hurt yours. Claim the name as close to your channel name as possible, do it in the very beginning, and move on.

By protecting your name across your channel, website, and social media profiles, you protect yourself for future opportunities. You might even research a trademark. You’re starting small, but someday, if your channel becomes huge, you might want to promote products and do many things that haven’t even crossed your mind.

Because we believed Video Influencers would be big and we wanted to protect our brand, we bought our trademark before we did anything with our channel. That way, if someday we decided to have a clothing line or some other product, we would have the means to do so.

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BECOME A STAND-OUT

Now that you've created your channel and you've picked a name, you need to fill out a couple of key areas. First, select an avatar. That's the small, square image beside your channel name. If it's your personal channel, find a nice headshot. If it's a brand, you might use a logo. Whatever you choose, make it eye-catching, interesting, and clear. The second area is your YouTube cover art. This is a big banner at the top of your channel page, and it gives people their first impression of your content.

When someone lands on your channel page, you have, at most, five seconds to form their opinion of you. Your cover art must grab their attention and create the right impression. Make sure it communicates who the channel is for, what it's about, and why it should matter to the viewer. As in life, you only get one chance to make a first impression, so make sure your cover image is strong.

A third area to fill out on your channel page is your social media accounts. YouTube makes it easy to link to all your active social media profiles, as well as your website. Fourth, fill out your "About" page. We recommend not only introducing who you are and what the channel is about, but also clearly articulating what people can expect from it, why it will help them, and what value it provides.

Sometimes, people get too "me" focused on their "About" page. They write something like, 'This channel is about me. It's about my thoughts, and I think you should subscribe.' We don't recommend that kind of language. Use the word "you" more, so it reads something like this: "You can expect videos, encouragement, live streams, light-hearted videos, and entertainment." You can also connect an email account here, so businesses, brands, and other people can get in touch with you for collaborations. You never know what kind of opportunities will come your way as you build your influence on YouTube.

Optimizing your channel page in these ways is the difference between being the Coca-Cola on the shelf or some general cola brand. Go the extra mile.

Spruce up your look so that, even if you have videos that are similar to other channels, your presentation is clear and stands out.

Remember, when someone lands on your channel page, you have five seconds to make a first impression. You won’t regret taking a little extra time to make it look as nice as possible.

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DON’T SWEAT IT (TOO MUCH)

In this chapter, we have encouraged you to think about your channel name and given tips for setting up your channel page. Ultimately, building your channel is about building your *brand*. While these tips and strategies are important, and we encourage you to do your best, don’t get stuck at this point. At the end of the day, your content is more important than your channel name or channel art. In the next chapter, we’ll show you how to create powerful video content that reaches your ideal audience and builds your influence, so turn the page and let’s continue our journey.

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CHAPTER 4

CONTENT: CREATE LASTING IMPACT

‘Content marketing is the only marketing left.’

SETH GODIN

Have you ever turned off a movie or TV show halfway through? We certainly have. Why did we do that? Because it didn’t hold our interest. Have you ever stopped reading a book? We hope you don’t stop reading this one, but the reason you’d stop reading is because it didn’t hold your attention, or the information wasn’t good, or you didn’t find it inspiring or motivational.

The reality is, if content doesn’t add value to our lives, we abandon it. We live in a world where we can quickly close one video and start another at the click of a button. Value should be your focus when creating any content, on YouTube or any other platform. The value can be informational through news, entertainment through comedy, education, or even connecting on a deeper, personal level through vlogging.

Beyond that, you can inspire and motivate. People go to YouTube with the expectation of receiving something. When you’re wondering what sort of video to create, think about the kind of value you want to provide people. If you aren’t naturally talented or don’t look like a superstar or aren’t personable, the value you deliver trumps everything. YouTube has been a game-changer for so many ordinary people, because it makes them into superstars through the value of the content they create.

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DELIVERING VALUE

Great content is anything that adds value to the viewer's life, so ask yourself, 'What kind of value are the viewers getting?' We believe every piece of content should deliver at least one of the following:

NEWS AND INFORMATION

This would include channels presenting interesting facts, breaking news, the latest gossip stories, and world events. It also includes Top Ten channels with videos like "Top Ten Things to do in Greece."

ENTERTAINMENT

This content causes viewers to laugh, to smile, to cry. It's sharable. It's fun. It's compelling.

EDUCATION

This content helps viewers solve a problem, become better at something, or learn a skill.

INSPIRATION AND MOTIVATION

Inspiration and motivation go hand in hand. These videos get the viewer pumped up and excited. They get people to think bigger or feel better about themselves. They add a boost to the viewer's week.

CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

No matter what type of videos you create, you must provide your audience with a feeling of connection. Connecting to a community of people allows your viewers to feel like they're part of something bigger than themselves.

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CHOOSING YOUR CONTENT

What type of content do you most enjoy watching on YouTube? Maybe you're a food lover. Do you enjoy watching people eating, or do you prefer cooking shows? What do you value the most, and is it something you want to recreate?

Even better, is there some kind of content you don't see on YouTube, or you don't see being done well, that you would enjoy? It's perfectly fine to recreate what other people are doing, or to improve upon somebody else's content, but it's more powerful to create something new. Whatever you choose, make sure your content resonates with your experience, with your skills and talents, and with your personality. Getting to that sweet spot requires some self-awareness.

Play to your strengths. Are you more analytical and factual? Consider providing informative content. Have people told you that you have a natural talent for encouraging people and making them feel better? If so, consider finding a way to motivate and inspire people. Are you a connector who enjoys making people feel welcomed and included? Then focus on creating connection and community.

The best content creators do all of the above. A popular term on YouTube is "edutainment," and it refers to content that combines education and entertainment. Those who do it well are experiencing massive success. The best content creators inform, inspire, educate, entertain, and build community all at once.

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HOW OFTEN TO RELEASE NEW CONTENT

More is usually better on YouTube. The more frequent your uploads, the more attention your channel will get. However, consistency is even more important. Find a balance between uploading often and keeping your quality consistent. Make sure you're committed for the long haul.

In our interview with Ellie and Jared Mecham, family vloggers with over 1.2 million subscribers and 500 million views who have documented their journey with infertility and pregnancy, they shared with us a simple formula for success on YouTube based on the acronym CQC: Consistent Quality Content. A common element of YouTube success is posting quality content on a consistent basis.

If you plan on creating a platform and growing your brand on YouTube, we recommend posting at least one new video a week. If you can post more than that and keep your quality high, we encourage you to do so, but we believe quality is more important than quantity. Every piece of content needs to have value for the viewer.

If you upload a video every day for fifty-two days, but then you stop and don't upload anything for the rest of the year, that won't benefit you as much as uploading one video a week for fifty-two weeks. People get excited about becoming YouTubers and creating content, but then they get burned out. It's better to spread out your content over a longer period of time. That's when you start seeing real results.

Remember to think of your YouTube channel like a TV channel. Your favorite program airs once a week at a specific time, so the audience can depend on it. If you want to build loyalty, momentum, and trust between you and your audience, then you need to show up on a regular basis delivering the same value every time.

Like a TV show, weekly is the minimum. What do you suppose would happen if a popular TV show suddenly failed to air at the expected time on the expected day of the week? There would be outrage among the fans and a loss of trust. What if it happened more than once? The show would lose

viewers permanently, as fans started to think, “Was the show canceled? Is it not on the air anymore?” When a TV show loses consistency, people forget about it and look for other content. The same is true on YouTube. To build true influence, income, and impact on YouTube, you must be consistent.

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MAKING YOUR VIDEOS STAND OUT

We encourage you to spend time watching content from other successful YouTubers in your niche and writing down ideas. What do you like about their content? What do you not like about it? What ideas could you potentially apply to your own content? Also, it can be helpful to watch videos outside of your niche. Some of the best ideas come from unrelated subject matter.

Content value matters more than production value. The best camera in the world with the best-looking picture quality won't impact your audience unless the content is interesting. It doesn't matter how good your video looks if it's void of value. However, the production value is still important, so if your content is interesting, we also encourage you to level up your production value.

Make a list of things you'd like to upgrade and improve when it comes to your content. Do you want to get a new camera? Can you improve your lighting? Could you decorate your home, studio, or office, or your workplace studio in a better way to make your content more visually appealing? Let this be a guiding principle: always start with what you have and then work to improve it over time. That applies to both your content and your production quality.

If you've already built an audience, another tip for making your content stand out is to ask them for feedback. Viewers love to feel involved. Successful YouTubers evolve as they get feedback and learn from their community, hearing what's good, what's bad, what could be made better, and getting content ideas. Ask people to provide feedback in the comments. You might even consider running a survey using YouTube's poll feature or a service like SurveyMonkey.

If you want to build a community, your content has to continually resonate with your fans, but you also have to actively connect with your community, so turn the page, because we're going to share with you our best tips for doing that.

Struggling to come up with ideas for your first few videos? We've got you covered! Check out a free video at TubeSecretsBook.com/Ideas.

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CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY: ENGAGE WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

'The Internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow.'

BILL GATES

The essence of what makes a YouTube influencer different from a Hollywood influencer is the connection you have with your audience. Your relationship with the audience is key to building trust, and that trust is where you'll find opportunity.

We love going to the movies. Nothing beats a good movie, especially the ones where you can lay back, kick up your feet, and soak up the action, comedy, and thrills. However, YouTube doesn't work that way. Viewers aren't simply reclining in their sofas, absorbing content. Instead, they are leaning forward to engage in a two-way conversation. It's not enough to simply publish content on YouTube. You need to build a community.

A recent article from the Huffington Post[14] revealed that YouTube is crushing cable TV in viewer numbers. Statistics from Google show that YouTube reaches more eighteen-to-forty-nine-year-olds than any cable network in the US. The former model of pushing content without conversation doesn't work with the current generation. You have to create community to thrive and grow.

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FIND YOUR COMMUNITY

It's important to figure out who your community is. First, and most importantly, your community is composed of your YouTube subscribers. Every YouTuber wants to grow their subscriber base as much as possible. The more subscribers you have, the more attention your videos get. That's the primary way to get to the next level. In a way, people watching your videos is kind of like going on a date. If you can get them to subscribe, you've gone from the first date to a relationship. It means the viewer liked your content enough to stay regularly involved with you. They want updates, they want connection, and they're willing to commit.

Power Tip: YouTube now allows people to turn on notifications for your channel, so encourage subscribers to become super subscribers by hitting that notification button. They will be informed every time you release a new video. The button looks like a bell, so if you can convince people to ring the bell, it's like going from the first date to dating consistently to getting engaged. In a business sense, getting married is the final step and would be if somebody becomes a customer of yours or invests with you at a deeper level.

If people follow you on the social media platforms connected to your YouTube channel, that creates another level of community. The people who are willing to do that are sold on your videos and want to continue receiving your content, but now they are also actively engaging in the conversation. Always ask your audience to follow you on social media. If you can get them to do so, you are creating an audience that values the interaction, and that's huge for channel growth. That's why, on platforms like Twitter, replying to people's tweets and retweeting posts is so important.

What if your channel starts with zero subscribers? How can you build an audience from nothing? Well, technically, everybody starts at zero, so don't feel discouraged. First, invite the people you already know: friends, family, acquaintances, coworkers, anybody. Don't be afraid to ask people directly. Pick up the phone and call or text. Tell people, 'Hey, I started a YouTube channel, and I could use some help. Would you be willing to subscribe? I'd appreciate it very much.' The ones who agree will become the initial core of

your audience. Get your channel on the radar of everybody you know and ask them to help support you. Asking people you know is an opportunity to practice pitching your channel, and it will help you clarify how people will benefit from watching your videos.

Include links to your YouTube channel in all of your social media profiles, in your email signature, anywhere that will let you post it. Starting from zero can be very challenging, so generate initial viewership as soon as you can. It’s the first step to creating influence on YouTube.

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CONTINUE TO BUILD YOUR COMMUNITY

After uploading content on YouTube, the best way to build your community is asking people to subscribe. Always remind your viewers to subscribe to your channel. Many content creators make the mistake of assuming that viewers know about subscribing, but the truth is, many viewers either don't know or don't think about it. The creators who ask people to subscribe in every video tend to have larger audiences.

Power Tip: Give viewers a good reason to subscribe. Don't just annoy them with constant requests. A huge mistake we see YouTubers make is sounding desperate, begging people to subscribe instead of leading with value. A good way to encourage subscribers might sound like this, 'And don't forget to subscribe, so you never miss one of my brand new weekly recipe videos.' Then you're not just pleading for subscribers but providing a compelling reason.

A second way to build community is by encouraging people to leave comments on your videos. When they do leave a comment, always take the time to respond, especially when you're just getting started. On Video Influencers, we provide a question of the day for each video and invite people to answer in the comments. Doing this repeatedly over time has built an engaged community on our YouTube channel.

Power Tip: Engagement with your audience through comments is huge for working the YouTube algorithm. The more comments and conversations the algorithm sees on your video, the more relevant the video will appear to be. This will help it rank higher in search results.

Conversation sets YouTube apart from traditional media like television or movies. Viewers can provide direct feedback and opinions about every video. They can critique, compliment, and criticize—that's the beauty of it. Respond to everything the community throws at you, so you can build your tribe.

But YouTube comments alone aren't enough. Go above and beyond to engage with people on other social media platforms. We make it a goal to

respond to every comment, tweet, or Facebook message. As your platform grows, this becomes more challenging, but a commitment to do this in the early stages of your channel is key. It’s the difference between those who succeed at building community and those who do not.

Yes, it’s hard, and it takes a lot of time. We know you’re busy, but you should never be too busy for your fans. No YouTube channel succeeds without regular viewers, so we believe every creator should commit to connecting with their community in every way possible.

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NAME YOUR COMMUNITY

Many of the top YouTubers have created a community name for their fans. The largest YouTuber, PewDiePie, creates gaming videos and calls his fans “bros.” The family vlogging channel *SacconeJolys* calls their viewers “friendliest friends.” We call our community “influencers.” Personal brands like Gary Vaynerchuk and Jake Paul call their audience “Vayniacs” and “Jake Paulers,” respectively. Creating a community name allows fans and superfans to affiliate, self-declare, and self-align with their community and tribe.

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CREATE DEEP CONNECTIONS

If you want to connect with viewers at a deeper level, you can message them directly or reply to them in a video. We often reply on Twitter with a Twitter video, and the response has been amazing. You can reply through Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat Direct Message. Viewers value this kind of direct interaction as much as, if not more than, your actual video content.

We often spend thirty to sixty seconds in a video simply thanking or acknowledging specific viewers or answering questions from our community. When we do that, especially when we name names, people feel encouraged, surprised, and happy to see that we care enough to take the time to speak to them. A great example of someone who makes deep connections with his fans is Justin Khoe from the channel *ThatChristianVlogger*. His mission is to help people on their journey of faith and understanding the Bible. During the initial growth of his channel, he always made time in his schedule to reply to every email, and to make phone calls and Skype calls with anybody who asked.

Besides creating extraordinarily deep relationships with people, he also receives helpful feedback on his channel. He uses that feedback to learn more about his community and create better content. Due to his diligence in becoming an active member of his community, he was able to turn YouTube into a full-time career. From there, he built his income through crowdfunding and audience support in a little over a year.

Depth matters. Always look for ways you can create meaningful connections with your community. It always pays off in the long run. When you create and nurture your community, you build trust. That trust and engagement will enable you to create consistent income through committed viewers.

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BECOME A JUDY

Benji's wife, Judy of *It's Judy Time*, was the first YouTube success story we ever observed. She has millions of subscribers, thousands of videos, over a billion video views, and has been on YouTube for almost ten years. She started with makeup videos, but now she also sells her own products, works with YouTube directly, and has experienced amazing success.

When people ask us how she became so famous and successful, we say that, outside of her content, the most significant contributing factor to her success is the trust she's built with her viewers. In the first few years of her YouTube career, when she was relatively unknown, she only spent half of her time creating content. The other half she spent engaging with her audience. In fact, every day, from 10 p.m. until 2 or 3 in the morning, she engaged with her audience directly.

At the time, the people she responded to weren't even committed fans. They were viewers leaving comments, tweeting, or making blog posts. Judy spent tons of time answering questions, continuing conversations on topics from her videos, and building community before she even knew what community was. The reason she stands apart from other creators today is because she valued her viewers as much as, if not more than, her own content.

As an example of how committed and loyal Judy's fan base is, almost every time she launches a new product online, it sells out in the first day. An overwhelming amount of traffic hits the site, with fans asking when the stock will be replaced. It has been this way with every product launch in the last five years.

Ten years into her YouTube career, Judy has become one of the most trusted influencers in her space, and that trust is the essence of what makes a YouTube creator different from other kinds of celebrities. That trust lays a foundation for almost every opportunity you can receive.

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DEVELOP TRUE FANS

From the very first video you upload, begin creating your community through engagement. You don't need a large audience to build a full-time business or personal brand on YouTube; you just need an engaged audience of true fans. Chris Pirillo, founder of the annual event in Seattle, Washington called VloggerFair, said, 'The size of the community doesn't matter as much as the depth of the connections with them.'

This idea is explained further in the famous article by Kevin Kelly[15] that says, 'To be a successful creator, you do not need millions of dollars or millions of customers, millions of clients or millions of fans. To make a living as a craftsperson, photographer, musician, designer, author, animator, app maker, entrepreneur, or inventor, you only need a thousand true fans.'

Here's the actual math, according to Kelly. You have to create enough content that you can earn, on average, $100 profit a year from each fan. You can do this by using the monetization strategies we offer in this book. Remember, it's always easier to give existing fans more content than to find new fans. Create a direct relationship with them, so that they are paying you directly. That way, you keep the full $100 from each fan. Then, you only need 1,000 of them to earn $100,000 per year. That's a great living for most people.

Gaining a thousand true fans is much easier than aiming for a million, especially when you're just starting out. If you can add just one new fan a day, you can get to a thousand in a few years.

Build your community of true fans by generating trust with your viewers. That trust and engagement enables you to create a consistent income. In the next chapter, we'll show you how you can monetize your content and turn your passion into profit and your creativity into a career.

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14 Ligato, Lorenzo. "YouTube Is Crushing Cable TV, According To Google." HuffingtonPost.com. (accessed April 26, 2018)

15 Kelly, Kevin. “1,000 True Fans.” The Technium.com. (accessed April 26, 2018)

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CHAPTER 6

CASH: MONETIZE YOUR CONTENT

"Chase the vision, not the money, and the money will end up following you."

TONY HSIEH, ZAPPOS CEO

Some people think talking about money is taboo. The way we're raised tends to shape our emotions and mindset when it comes to money. However, one thing is for sure: money follows and fuels mission.

We encourage you to stay grounded in your reason, mission, and motivation for building your influence on YouTube. Whether your purpose was to impact people around the world, build a community, entertain and inspire, or provide for yourself and your family, you need to keep that reason at the forefront of your mind as you adventure further into the process.

In order to serve your mission and vision at the highest level, you need resources. More specifically, you need money. With money, you have more freedom with your content and production quality. You can hire a team and support others, whether employees, assistants, or a charity you love. With money, you can maximize your effectiveness in the world.

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MONETIZING ON YOUTUBE

We want to share with you ten ways to build your income on YouTube, but we advise you to never chase the money. That's a recipe for frustration. Chase your focus, your mission, your passion, and your purpose, and allow money and income to stem from that. This chapter isn't meant to define the *only* ways to make money. There are far more ways to generate a good income than we could possibly cover in a single book, so instead, we will provide you with a few key monetization strategies and ideas.

ADSENSE

The first and most widely understood way of making money on YouTube is with the AdSense program. Once your YouTube channel has over 1,000 subscribers and four thousand hours of watch time, it will be eligible for revenue sharing through the AdSense program. This gives YouTube permission to play ads before, beneath, or to the side of your video, and a portion of the ad's revenue is granted to you.

The amount of money you can make from AdSense varies. As a typical rule of thumb, creators in the US are paid an average of two dollars per one thousand views. Therefore, if you want to make $2,000 per month from YouTube content, you would need one million views per month. That's no easy feat, especially on a consistent basis, which is why AdSense is our least favorite monetization strategy. It's not practical for most video influencers, who might only reach a million views over the entire lifetime of their channel.

The AdSense strategy is best for prank, comedy, news, and entertainment channels, which tend to garner a large amount of views. Content trying to go viral is a prime example. We interviewed a couple named Jon and Nikki. On their channel, *Pranksters in Love*, they prank each other and other people, playing jokes that range from funny to extreme. In doing so, they have garnered over 388 million views, so AdSense is a great form of income for them.

However, if your YouTube channel doesn't fall into one of those categories, or if you struggle to get enough views, there's no need to fret. There are

several other ways to monetize your content, even without a ton of views.

AFFILIATE MARKETING

With affiliate marketing, you earn a commission by promoting a company's products. The process is simple: find a product you like, promote it, and earn a piece of the profit for each sale. All you have to do is find a company with an affiliate program. The most common affiliate program is Amazon Associates, which you can join by applying online. Once approved, you can create your own links to Amazon products, and anytime a viewer clicks on a link, you receive a percentage of the product's price, which could be anywhere between 4 to 10 percent.

As you can imagine, this income adds up quickly, as long as you work to increase the number of clicks and traffic to the link. Affiliate marketing is relevant for any type of YouTube channel, but it works especially well for beauty, tech, and review channels. That's because these kinds of channels tend to discuss specific products. If there's a product related to your niche—physical, digital, service, or live event—there may be an affiliate program for it.

Even with a relatively small audience, you could eventually build a six-figure income from affiliate marketing. Sean has worked with cameras for years, so outside of Video Influencers, he started a channel called *THiNK Media*, where he advises people on the best cameras and equipment for filming. Affiliate links are helpful in this circumstance, because he regularly reviews products, many of which he promotes and provides links to. Through a combination of YouTube videos and affiliate marketing alone, Sean built a six-figure income.

Amazon isn't the only affiliate program out there. Many different retail stores have programs you can apply for, including Target, Walmart, Kohl's, Sephora, and Nordstrom. The possibilities are almost endless for affiliate marketing. Whatever the nature of your channel, this is one source of income that is worth investigating.

YOUR OWN PRODUCT OR SERVICE

Another way to monetize your YouTube channel is to create a product or service. The benefit of selling your own product is that you don't make only

a small percentage of the revenue. Instead, the full profit belongs to you. Many YouTubers have created their own lines of merchandise, such as t-shirts, coffee mugs, hats, and other apparel. Websites like Teespring and Merch.Amazon.com have made creating merchandise easier than ever. However, your products don't have to stop at apparel and coffee mugs. You can also create digital products, such as educational services or eBooks.

Melanie Hamm, who we interviewed on Video Influencers, has a crafting and DIY channel. She gives away tons of free videos, while also offering paid digital training videos on the side that go more in-depth. You can turn any knowledge you have into a digital product and offer it to your audience. You can even offer consulting or coaching, especially if it's relevant for your niche and vision.

We've seen YouTubers with small audiences make six-figure incomes from this strategy because they offer valuable, inexpensive content alongside their free videos. As you gain fans who want to connect with you on a deeper level, your products or services are the deeper level you can provide. It builds up your community and your connection with your fans.

FREE PRODUCT TRADE

A dollar saved is a dollar earned. Often, in the pursuit of monetization, people forget that by saving in one place, they can spend in another. You can find brands, companies, or businesses that will send you free products in exchange for a review or promotion.

When Benji first started on YouTube with his then-fiancée Judy, he wasn't doing well financially. He needed to pay for their upcoming wedding, so he asked Sean to help him create a wedding series. Together, we created episodes around popular topics on wedding planning and reached out to brands we thought would want to sponsor us, such as bridal wear companies. For example, we created an episode around Judy trying on her wedding dress for the first time. The dress itself was provided by a wedding dress company, and in exchange for the free dress, we featured it in that episode.

The wedding series ultimately resulted in ten episodes that built up to the wedding and included the ceremony itself. Many of the episodes were

sponsored through free products, and some episodes also received monetary sponsorship.

Though the whole series wasn't fully a paid sponsorship, it was a dollar saved where we would have spent. Your audience doesn't need to be especially large to take advantage of free product trades like this, but it helps if your audience is focused. Miguel, who is part of the Video Influencers community, launched a channel sharing tips on music recording. He and his wife are musicians. They put out songs and EP's, and he wanted to launch a channel to help other people do the same. Because his channel is focused, he received over $7,000 worth of free products and software while he was still under 500 subscribers. Brands love to work with influencers who can prove their audience is aligned with the company's own target market, even if that market is small.

Whether you're a full-time YouTuber with 100,000 subscribers or you're new with less than 1,000, getting free products is as simple as reaching out through social media, sending an email, or even picking up the phone and asking. You will be surprised at how many companies will say yes. Every time you succeed at trading content for a product, you learn and get better at it, attracting more opportunities.

Often, the value you can offer a business, especially a smaller or local business like a restaurant, is the video you can produce for them. It might cost a business from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars to produce a professional quality video. As a creator, you can provide this for free in exchange for something from the business.

We know a YouTuber who loves food and travel. We advised him to use this technique to his advantage, even though he had almost no followers on his channel at the time. He went to a local restaurant and offered to produce a quality video for them that they could use on their website in exchange for a free meal. They took him up on the offer. His story isn't unique. This kind of exchange happens all the time. For companies, there's intrinsic value in these kinds of videos, even when the videos garner only a few views, so this is something you can get into when you're just starting out.

YOUR EXISTING BUSINESS

People tend to focus on monetizing solely within the YouTube environment. However, YouTube can also be used as an external arm and outreach for an existing business. Let's say you own a brick-and-mortar store. Your revenue comes almost exclusively from the store, but you could use a YouTube channel to produce content that promotes the business. Instead of making money directly from the videos, you're attracting people to the store, where the real revenue is generated.

When Benji rebuilt his real estate business, he decided to start a channel, *HomeDealzTV*, answering frequently asked real estate questions. He took the top questions people ask realtors, such as how to buy a house, how to price a house, and how to find a good agent, and provided the answers in a simple but compelling way. Even though the audience for this channel was relatively small, through this, he delivered value to his local network, attracted clients, and turned his business around. He went from doing fewer than ten property deals a year to over a hundred, all because of a simple idea of giving value through a YouTube channel.

Remember, when it comes to monetization, YouTube is primarily a means of communication. At one time, it made sense to go door-to-door selling products and services in local neighborhoods, because that was the most direct means of communication. Now, YouTube offers the digital means to do the same thing on a much broader scale. We believe every smart business owner and brand should leverage tools like YouTube to expand their reach and revenue online.

If you're a current business owner, ask yourself what kind of value you could deliver through video for your potential clients or customers. Are there questions you could answer? Tips or advice you could provide? When you create value for viewers, you drive people back to your business.

CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via internet sites like Kickstarter, Indiegogo, Patreon, and GoFundMe. On YouTube, Patreon is the top choice, widely used by many popular channels because it encourages regular support.

With Patreon, you ask people to pledge a certain amount of money, usually on a month-to-month basis, and offer specific rewards for varying levels of support. These rewards could be Q&A videos that only supporters can view, mentioning their names in the end credits of one of your videos, or any number of creative incentives to add value back to the audience.

Justin Khoe of *ThatChristianVlogger* built influence, trust, and a relationship with his audience for about a year before starting a Patreon page. More than sixty people have committed to supporting his channel monthly through Patreon, giving him enough money to turn his YouTube mission into a full-time job.

Phillip DeFranco runs a popular news channel on YouTube with a huge subscriber base. He supports his YouTube goals through AdSense. However, recently, YouTube made some changes to their ad policies, and most of his content was labeled as "not advertiser friendly," eliminating most of the AdSense income from his YouTube videos overnight. He responded by launching a Patreon account, and over 13,000 people signed up to support him in his vision for creating a progressive news and entertainment network. Viewers can support his channel for as little as $5 a month or as much as $1,000. If all of those supporters were only at the $5 level, that still comes out to over $65,000 in monthly support.

Crowdfunding disrupts the typical model of how things are done. In the past, people depended on the approval and support of the higher-ups and gatekeepers, yet crowdfunding empowers creators to support their vision and mission directly from the people who benefit from it the most.

Remember, we recommend you focus on building your influence first before focusing on building an income. Launching something like a crowdfunding initiative before you have a crowd will more than likely fail. Building trust and loyalty with viewers is key to success in crowdfunding and most other money-making endeavors.

EVENTS

Events provide another way of monetizing your YouTube content. These events can happen live and in-person, or you can host them online. They

can be free or require an admission charge, though it's far easier to invite people to a paid event once you've built a large audience.

A practical example would be a live performance. If you love a particular band or musician, buy their music on iTunes, listen to them on Spotify, and watch their videos on YouTube, the next step is to see them live. You'll pay a decent amount of money to attend that live performance, because you love their music. The same applies to you as an influencer on YouTube. If you're providing tons of value to your viewers, they will become fans, and they'll gladly buy tickets to see you at a live event.

A friend of ours, Daniel Eisenman, began hosting an event called International Tribe Design even when his audience was still fairly small. He took the trust and influence he'd built online to create events and meet-ups at unique locations around the world. Some of his fans gladly pay upwards of $2,000 just to attend these events. As a result of his popularity and success, Daniel has been able to visit exotic destinations, travel the world, and enjoy a lifestyle that most people only dream about, because he built his influence with online video first and then promoted live events to his audience.

As we mentioned, paid events don't need to be physical meet-ups. You can also host a paid online event or summit where you gather a group of speakers who share their knowledge and experience about your particular niche. Viewers who care enough about the topic will gladly pay for the opportunity to hear expert speakers.

BRAND SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships, also called "brand deals" in the YouTube community, are a form of monetization that has become extremely popular on YouTube, especially for the bigger influencers. It works similarly to the free product trade we discussed earlier, with the added perk that companies pay real money in exchange for product promotions.

For example, if your YouTube channel does toy reviews, a toy company might reach out to you with an offer to work together. In exchange for bringing awareness to their company's products, you get paid a generous amount.

Brand sponsorships happen at many different levels. Sometimes, you can initiate this by reaching out to a brand yourself. Some YouTubers work with agents who connect them with relevant brands. There are also online marketplaces for brand sponsorships, such as Famebit.com. With Famebit, signing up costs nothing, but you must have at least 5,000 subscribers.

Let's say you have a tech channel, and you use Famebit to discover a headphone company looking to work with influencers. You send them a proposal, and if they agree to work with you, they send you a free pair of headphones. You agree to a fixed price for the project, and once you've completed your side of the bargain, they pay you. It's as simple as that. Your side of the deal might be as easy as wearing the headphones on your videos.

Heather Torres has a homeschooling channel. Eight months after she started her channel, it had grown to over 2,500 subscribers. She'd only posted fifteen videos, but because she's a homeschool mom, she emailed the company that she purchased her curriculum from and inquired about the possibility of doing a collaboration. The company was mystified. They had no experience with YouTube branding deals, so she explained the possibilities and what it might look like. Eventually, they came to an agreement.

In that brand deal, the company gave her all the curriculum for free, a value of over $1,100. Additionally, the company paid her almost $4,000 to create a series of videos talking about her experience with the curriculum. On top of that, they also set up an affiliate deal to give Heather a 10 percent commission for anyone who signed up for and purchased the curriculum through her channel links.

Heather's example proves that you don't have to be a large-scale YouTuber to take advantage of brand deals. As long as you have focused content, you might be able to generate interest with related companies.

In fact, companies refer to YouTubers like Heather as micro-influencers. According to *Forbes*[16] magazine, 82 percent of viewers are likely to follow a micro-influencer's recommendations, which proves companies don't need to rely on huge channels to advocate for their brands. We encourage you to

consider what brands you want to collaborate with, so you can start using brand deals to build your income.

LICENSED CONTENT

Rather than creating their own videos, many companies are willing to pay YouTubers in order to license their content. Sometimes, the intrinsic value of your video has little to do with your popularity and more to do with the content itself. In other words, the nature of a video sometimes has value on its own, separate from your channel. Various media companies can take and use it for their own purposes, paying you a licensing fee to do so.

Travel vloggers who create videos about interesting and exotic locations often work with local travel boards in various countries, licensing or selling the stock footage they shoot. Travel boards then use that footage in their own marketing and promotions.

Other influencers build their income by uploading their footage to stock video websites like istockphoto.com, videohive.net, or shutterstock.com. Stock video marketplaces give creators another income opportunity by making it easy to license their content.

As you grow your authority, your influence, and the value of your brand, your face, image, likeness, and reputation also begin to acquire value to media outlets. Popular channels like *Pranksters in Love* often license their content to major media outlets for significant revenue.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

A final way to build income and monetize your content on YouTube that we want to share in this book is through speaking engagements. If you've built enough influence and authority around a topic, you become a valuable candidate for speaking at industry events, conferences, conventions, and even local events. Sean, for example, travels all over the country and even internationally, earning thousands of dollars in speaking fees. Amy Landino, a marketing and business coach, has leveraged her YouTube influence into ten to twenty paid speaking gigs a year at corporate events. Amy has a strong core audience on YouTube, but she's not a huge YouTuber. Despite this, she has created a significant income for herself. If

you build your influence in a specific niche, you can use that influence to open the door to many speaking opportunities.

JP Sears, noted speaker, coach, and consultant, serves as an interesting case study. When he created his character Ultra Spiritual JP a couple of years ago, the videos quickly went viral. As a result, he received many requests to speak in character at events. In fact, he received so many requests that he got overwhelmed, but this drove up his speaking fee.

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BEGINNER MISTAKES

When it comes to monetization, the biggest mistake we see creators make is focusing on income first instead of influence. Influence must always come first, and it's impossible to build influence without building trust, adding value, and creating a connection and relationship with people. While we all know exceptions to this rule—people who make quick money by being dishonest or taking shortcuts—those people never last, and they never create legacies. On Video Influencers, we didn't turn on YouTube ads for over a year and a half, because we didn't want to hinder long-term audience growth with a shortsighted focus on making money.

Depending on your financial situation, you might need to start making money sooner than that. However, we don't recommend starting on YouTube out of desperation. You have to have the determination and willingness to treat YouTube as a marathon and not a sprint. We wanted to build trust with people, and we knew those YouTube ads would not add up to significant income early on. Our first priority was modeling influence, then building a community, and finally, last of all, flipping the switch on monetization.

In one of our Video Influencers interviews, Lewis Howes, creator of one of the top podcasts on iTunes, *The School of Greatness*, reveals that he ran his podcast for two years before he added sponsors and other monetization opportunities.

Focus on building your influence, stay patient and persistent, and income will follow. Remember, money follows mission.

A second mistake we see creators make is letting the monetization opportunity overshadow what's good for the audience. If a brand wants to promote their product on your channel because of your authority, trust, and large audience, make sure their product is appropriate for your audience. Even if they're offering a lot of money, don't agree to it if the monetization deal doesn't provide relevant, meaningful content for your loyal viewers. Otherwise, you will hurt your channel and lose their trust.

If you have a beauty channel where you provide makeup and hair care tips, and an electronics company approaches you to promote their TVs, it’s not a good deal. If you agree to it, you will damage the integrity of your channel, because your viewers look to you for beauty tips.

As social media expert and New York Times bestselling author Gary Vaynerchuk says, ‘Doing the right thing is always the right thing.’ When monetization opportunities come your way, always put your audience first.

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PICKING A STARTING POINT

Ask yourself, are you a coach or a teacher? Are you somebody who shares ideas or opinions? Are you someone who entertains? Figuring out your role in regard to your viewers helps you determine which monetization strategies work best for you.

For example, if you're a teacher, then having a digital product to teach additional techniques and skills might make more sense for you than doing a brand deal. If you entertain people through lifestyle vlogs, and you've grown an audience that likes and trusts you, then a brand sponsorship makes sense.

When picking a monetization option to start with, we recommend trying a few and narrowing it down through trial and error. Through experimentation, you will discover which method fits best with your brand, message, mission, and values. Turning on YouTube ads is the simplest way to start monetizing, but with a low amount of views, it won't produce much income. Even so, it's a starting point. Affiliate marketing might be a better starting point, because you don't have to create any products yourself. All you do is make recommendations and get paid.

Some people do all the above. Individual forms of monetization might not make a lot of money, but by combining them all, some YouTubers manage to create significant income. Just as financial advisors recommend diversifying your portfolio, we recommend you diversify your income streams. That way, if something should dramatically change, like it did for Philip DeFranco, all of your eggs are not in one basket, and you have other income streams to lean on.

Whatever you decide to do, remember that the value in your videos comes first. Consistently delivering value must be your primary focus, no matter the monetization opportunities that come your way. Next, we'll take a closer look at how you can create consistency.

16 Bohan, John. “There’s Nothing Micro About The Power Of Micro-Influencers.” Forbes.com. (accessed April 26, 2018)

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CHAPTER 7

CONSISTENCY: HUSTLE YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS

“Rome wasn’t built in a day.”
You’ve probably heard that old adage. Well, it’s true of more than just Rome. It always takes time to build something great.

Think about it. People spend years trying to master a skill, craft, or hobby. YouTube is no different. How was Rome built? Did people stand around doing nothing, waiting for the empire to appear? No, they laid down bricks every single day. The same goes for your YouTube channel. It’s easy to focus on your YouTube empire and overlook the daily work of creating and uploading videos.

The brick-laying system is more important than the whole. Remember, the key to building momentum on YouTube is posting consistent strategic-quality content over time. In this chapter, we want to share with you some systems and principles that will help you continue to lay the bricks of YouTube success on your way to building an empire.

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COMMITTING TO CONSISTENCY

The key to consistency on YouTube is to just show up. In business, those who show up are those who succeed. On YouTube, it's important to do so for a number of reasons.

- First, when you create consistent videos, it's like hanging out with a friend. The more often you hang out, the closer you get to that friend.
- Second, as you keep posting and observing the results, you learn more about the platform and the ever-changing YouTube algorithm, both of which are vital to channel growth. Consistency is more than getting content out there. It's about learning the process that creates success.
- Third, by showing up consistently, you get regular feedback from the audience that helps you improve your content.
- Fourth, you might feel overwhelmed with how many things you have to learn, but practice makes progress. The more videos you film, the better you get at camera work. The more videos you edit, the better you get at editing.

Dale Carnegie said, 'Learning is an active process. We learn by doing. Only knowledge that is used sticks in your mind.'

Creating a schedule is imperative. That way people know when to expect your videos. Also, YouTube rewards consistent channels by pushing them higher in the search and recommended lists. Don't forget, as a business, YouTube generates revenue by selling ads on videos. Therefore, when you create consistent quality content, you position yourself for YouTube to promote your videos to a wider audience. They love to reward consistency.

Creating regular videos is hard work, but the harder you work, the luckier you get. When you post consistently, you put more opportunities into the world, more hooks in the sea, for people to find and discover you. You never know which video might become the video that opens up the door to success. Some of that is up to chance, but you can stack the deck in your favor by uploading more often.

For example, over the last twenty-four months, Sean has committed to uploading at least two videos per week, because he believes in the power of consistency. It's not glamorous; in fact, it's a bit of a grind. Some of the videos perform better than others, but that weekly discipline has paid off in unexpected ways. In mid-2016, Sean uploaded a video about getting free stuff on Amazon. He didn't expect it to go viral, but shortly after the video was uploaded, he noticed it gaining views much faster than his other videos. Today, it has over 2.4 million views and continues to get between 25,000 to 30,000 views a month. That video is responsible for over 10,000 new subscribers to his channel.

You never know which video might be the one that blows up and opens your door to success. Sean was stacking the deck the whole time, and it paid off. While you can't control which video will be the one that does it for you, commitment to consistency creates the best chance to make it happen.

We interviewed Jerry from the tech channel *Barnacules Nerdgasm*, a YouTuber with over 900,000 subscribers. He told us, 'Don't get discouraged if things happen slowly. It took me four years to get my first 10,000 subscribers, but it only took me two years to get the next 700,000.'

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CONSISTENCY BEST PRACTICES

How can you stay consistent?

We are full-time YouTubers. We post a ton of content on our channel, but we know how busy life can get. You've got family demands. You might have a full-time job, or you might be trying to build a business and want to use YouTube to market that business.

Just like you, we deal with several demands in our lives, so we've had to become efficient and strategic in creating content for our channel. Our strategy is composed of two essential things:

1. Scheduling in advance

2. Producing in batches

Prior planning prevents poor performance. Or, to put it another way, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Planning saves you a ton of energy, so we schedule a shoot days in advance. With batch producing, we set everything up—lighting, cameras, sound, stage—and film multiple videos in one session. We'll even change our shirts throughout the shoot to create the illusion of days passing.

Batch producing has been the essential element for creating a lot of content and being consistent in a minimal amount of time. Video Influencers runs a weekly interview show, which means we need to shoot and edit fifty-two videos a year. In order to make that more manageable, we do a few things. Sometimes, we go on mini tours, where we visit an area that has a few different people we'd like to talk to, and then we batch produce those interviews. Other times, we attend industry-related events and shoot ten to twenty interviews over a matter of days, giving us ten to twenty weeks of content.

If you have a full-time job, a family to take care of, or you go to school, then keeping it simple is better than nothing at all. When we're going through a busy time in our lives, we prefer to create simple, valuable videos

that don’t require a lot of extra production. We utilize graphics and videos to spice them up. We also love to go live. If you have the knowledge or expertise to talk about your channel’s niche off the cuff, going live is an easy way to get content out there without the need for heavy editing.

Too many creators get bogged down in production, and they get overwhelmed with the amount of footage they have or the scope of their idea. Experimenting with different content formats allows you to stay more consistent on a week-to-week basis, whether that’s going live for fifteen to thirty minutes and sharing some tips, shooting a short Q&A just to engage with your audience, or making a quick talking head video.

Scale back the complexity. That doesn’t mean your content will suffer. It simply means you’re being as realistic as possible about how much time you have, how many resources you have, and what it takes to post consistent content on a regular basis.

Almost every YouTuber we know, ourselves included, started off with talking head videos, low production values, and few resources. Even the channels that now create big, expensive videos didn’t start off that way, so don’t stress about it. Just start creating consistent content.

When Benji first started his channel, he used an inexpensive, consumer-level camcorder. He now uses a much nicer, professional-quality DSLR camera. Philip DeFranco’s news channel now has over 5.7 million subscribers, and he has a huge production team working with him to create top-notch videos. He’s built a media empire, but his channel didn’t start that way. You can go to his channel and view his first video and see the difference for yourself. That first video, uploaded in December 2006, was shot on a simple webcam in black and white. But he got started and stayed consistent, and that’s made all the difference.

HOW OFTEN?

How consistent do you need to be? How often should you upload to YouTube?

Those are extremely common questions. The simplest answer is, “As often as you can.” It depends, of course, on how busy your life is, and how

challenging things are for you right now. If you can only manage one video a month, that's better than nothing, so long as you're consistent about it. Ideally, we recommend a minimum of at least once a week.

Too many beginners go hardcore, post tons of content up front, and then forget about YouTube. A recent study by Matt Gielen, who wrote an article[17] about cracking the YouTube algorithm, reveals that YouTube prefers creators who post two to three videos per week.

It's better to upload one video a week for fifty-two weeks and stay consistent throughout the whole year than to upload fifty-two videos in the first month and only upload sporadically afterward. You learn so much more about content creation that way, and your channel benefits from the long-term consistency. Plus, you can avoid burnout that way, because you're pacing yourself. Remember, it's the consistent creators who get rewarded by both the audience and the platform.

If you have the bandwidth, the infrastructure, the passion, and the hustle, then don't feel limited to only posting once a week. Posting more than once a week will grow your influence faster.

At the end of the day, consistency is something you must have to succeed on YouTube. Consistent hard work leads to success, and from success comes greatness.

OUR SHOOT DAY CHECKLIST

- Block time on your calendar for the shoot. What gets scheduled gets done.
- Research your video ideas ahead of time. We've all heard the saying, 'If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.' The best creators on YouTube always do research before they press record. See the chapter on ranking for tips on how to do this.
- Outline the content of your videos. We don't read from a teleprompter or script for our videos, but we like to work off simple outlines. We use Google Docs to create a bulleted list of things we want to make sure we include.
- Prepare your gear. Before your shoot day, make sure to charge your camera batteries. Lay out any gear you're going to use so there are no surprises when it's time to record.
- Select a location. A location that is well lit with minimal background noise is ideal when shooting videos.

- Prepare your wardrobe. We shoot multiple videos at once but release them over successive weeks, so we like to prepare simple shirt changes to indicate a passing of time and to create variety in our videos.
- Be purposeful with your morning routine. Go into your shoot day well-rested, focused, and confident.
- Shoot your videos. All of your preparation has led to this point. Hit the record button and own it.
- Shoot any B-roll. B-roll includes extra footage, clips, and transition scenes that could support the main content you've recorded. Remember, if you begin editing and find out you need some footage, it will be very frustrating, so ask yourself while you're shooting, "Are there any other video clips I should get before I finish this session?"
- Shoot thumbnails. The thumbnail is one of the most important parts of a YouTube video, and trying to find a clear frame out of your video footage can be difficult. Getting a good thumbnail is as simple as turning on your camera's timer and getting an intentional photo of yourself.
- For more in-depth tips about shooting good video, check out the following video from *THiNK Media*: TubeSecretsBook.com/Checklist

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P A R T T W O

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TACTICS

By having the courage to step out, clarifying your message, setting up your home base with your channel, uploading quality content, nurturing and building your community, beginning to monetize, and staying consistent, you lay a solid foundation for success on YouTube. Next, we'll reveal some of the tricks, techniques, and ninja tactics to get you more views, more subscribers, and a bigger income. You've probably already started coming up with great content ideas, but we'll help you make the most of every opportunity. So, turn the page, and let's dive in.

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CHAPTER 8

SOCIAL MEDIA: LEVERAGE YOUR MESSAGE AND BRAND

"Content is fire, and social media is gasoline."

JAY BAER

What's your favorite era of music? We were born in the '80s, and at that time, bands like Guns N' Roses, Metallica, U2, and rap groups like NWA and Run DMC topped the charts. How did these groups first get noticed in the days before the internet? Through guerilla, viral, or grassroots marketing. They collected names for fanzines. They glued posters all over town and distributed flyers to potential fans. Hip-hop artists sold tapes from the trunks of their cars.

Now, over thirty years later, promotional tactics within the music industry haven't changed much, but we no longer see as many music promoters walking the streets, putting up posters or handing out flyers. Instead, most of them have moved online and now use social media. They don't need to add names to fanzine lists, because fans can now choose to follow their favorite artists on their favorite social media platforms. Instead of gluing posters all over town, they post images on Instagram. They are able to reach their target audience wherever they are through their computers or smartphones.

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INCREASING YOUR INFLUENCE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

When we first met Desi Perkins, she was a subscriber to Judy and Benji's vlogging channel. In 2013, she waited in line for hours at a meet-up just to get the chance to speak to us. Four years later, she's one of the top ten influencers in the highly competitive beauty and fashion niche on YouTube, accruing over 3 million subscribers to date. She managed to do that through a very smart social media strategy.

Some of her viewers don't realize she got her start on Instagram, where she used to post high-quality beauty inspiration photos. Those photos gradually built an audience of loyal followers, garnered her a ton of attention, and created a fan base. That fan base followed her to YouTube and laid a foundation on which her channel has grown. During the early days of Snapchat, she used the platform to engage her fans directly through the video message function. She would then promote her YouTube videos to Snapchat followers and, since Snapchat lacks a comment feature, ask them to engage through comments on YouTube.

She picked Instagram and Snapchat and committed to mastering those two platforms, uploading video clips, engaging with her audience, and playing by Instagram's rules. She was then able to send traffic to her channel.

In essence, Desi spent as much time on social media promoting her video content as she did creating and uploading the content, and she did it religiously. Her strategy gained her thousands, and sometimes tens of thousands, of comments for many of her YouTube videos, which is a game-changing amount of engagement. When the YouTube algorithm sees a high level of engagement around a video, it tends to promote it more, skyrocketing views and helping more people discover that content.

Desi's creative use of social media has grown a large audience for her at a much quicker rate than many other successful channels. It goes to show that social media sometimes influences your YouTube success more than the best practices on the platform itself because that exterior influence hacks

the algorithm. If you develop the influence to send people from social media to YouTube, the algorithm will love you for it.

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UNDERSTANDING USER BEHAVIOR

How many times a day do you pull out your phone and check notifications on your favorite social media platforms? An article in *Time* magazine[18] revealed that Americans collectively check their smartphones upwards of 8 billion times per day, and conservatively, 50 percent of that time is spent on social media platforms.

Clearly, social media has won the attention of people around the world. Therefore, as video influencers, we must strategically create relevant content to reach people where they are. If you're not involved regularly on social media platforms, you're missing out, and so is your YouTube channel.

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CHOOSING THE BEST PLATFORM FOR YOUR CONTENT

If you know your target audience, that will tell you exactly which social media platform or platforms you need to spend time on. Once you know where they hang out, you have to figure out how to create compelling, relevant, and engaging content on the appropriate platforms. Let’s look at some specific examples.

If your target audience is largely business and corporate professionals, then you should heavily focus on creating content for LinkedIn, as well as writing relevant industry content on websites like Medium.com. If you’re targeting a younger demographic, then Snapchat or Musical.ly might be relevant for you. If you know your audience is predominantly female and interested in things like cooking, DIY, fashion, or style, then Pinterest should be a focus.

A few platforms, specifically Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, are relevant for a wide variety of people across a broad demographic. Most audiences use these platforms, so they provide opportunity for just about every channel. Don’t neglect them, whatever your channel niche happens to be.

When you’re just starting out, think about which platforms you already use to connect with people. If you’re creating a channel around a passion of yours, then you most likely already follow influencers on specific social media platforms. If those people can grow an audience on those platforms, so can you. Use your existing engagement as a starting point to build your audience.

Often, your target audience is made up of people just like you, people who share the same interests. That’s why the social media platforms you already use can be a great starting place, especially if you’re unsure of how to build your audience. Pick the social platform you are most passionate about and start engaging people with quality content related to your channel. This is easier than ever because all social media has shifted toward video. Even

Instagram, which started as photo-only, now allows you to upload videos, live stream, and share additional video content through Instagram stories.

Mark Zuckerberg has announced that Facebook will be mostly video content by 2019. Studies have shown that the whole internet will be 80 percent video by then as well. These developments are great for YouTube channels, and you can already begin to take advantage of this shift.

Since you're creating video content on YouTube, you're perfectly positioned to create video content for all of the social media platforms at the same time. Learn how to tell your story and make it relevant for each platform. One big mistake many creators make is to create videos for YouTube and then simply upload the same exact video on every social media platform. Although that might be better than nothing, typically it doesn't do nearly as much as creating unique and different content for Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, or even getting deeply involved with the community on Reddit, if it's right for your niche.

Never forget, each social media platform is unique. You can't approach them all the same way. It's like the dress code at restaurants. The way you dress at a four-star restaurant differs from how you dress at a fast food place. They offer different dining experiences, and it's important to know that going in.

Living on the West Coast, we have access to our favorite fast food place, In-N-Out Burger. If you've never been there, we highly recommend it. They have a simple menu of great burgers and fries made with natural ingredients. However, when you go, it's important to remember that the dress code at In-N-Out is relaxed and casual. Flip flops, shorts, and a tank top are just fine.

On the other hand, if you walk into a restaurant at the Four Seasons in those clothes, the maître d' will kindly ask you to change into something more formal. The vibe of In-N-Out is entirely different from the vibe of the Four Seasons.

Social media is similar. Know the dress code of whatever platform you're attempting to use. Snapchat is best suited for behind-the-scenes, raw video

footage. It can be shaky and unpolished. Snapchat is like In-N-Out Burger. YouTube, on the other hand, allows you to upload much nicer content, widescreen video at 1080p or more, and good audio. You won’t find that on Snapchat.

The same goes for static images. Instagram works best with square images, while Facebook and Twitter prefer rectangular images. Find out the ideal image resolution, length of videos, and whether text, audio, video, pictures, or a combination works best. Don’t be afraid to experiment and see what kind of posts get the most attention and engagement.

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THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Where are the various social media platforms headed? As we already mentioned, it's obvious they are embracing video, but why are they shifting in that direction? The answer seems clear.

Advertising with video makes a much more powerful impact than any other type of ad. You probably noticed that when YouTube moved from static ads to streaming ads. They gain more attention from viewers and make a stronger impact. That's why other platforms are beginning to embrace the same thing. Video creates monetization opportunities on social media, so it's another potential revenue generator.

Here's what we recommend you do. First, just like Desi, pick two social media platforms. Developing consistency when multi-tasking on social media can be incredibly challenging, so learn the ropes and ease into it. Pick the platforms that are most complementary for you, your niche, and your target audience.

Second, we recommend blocking some time on your calendar to research and experiment with the two social media platforms you've chosen. Thirty minutes for each platform should be enough. Try some Google searches like "best practices for Instagram" or "how to use Instagram for business." You'll be amazed at the tips and content you will find.

The reason we're recommending a Google search rather than offering specific tactics is because specific social media tactics change constantly. You need to stay on top of the latest changes to platform strategies.

Spending just thirty minutes to study and learn about each platform might not seem like much, but it will place you in the top 10 percent of experts on those platforms. The fact of the matter is, few people take the time to really learn how social media works, and fewer keep up with the constant changes and newest strategies. Do this, and you'll be well ahead of the curve.

Third, after you've spent some time studying and practicing on your chosen platforms, create a simple content strategy for how you intend to make the

most of them. It should be simple enough that you could sketch it on a cocktail napkin. As an example, this is Sean's social media strategy:

> I will post on Instagram at least once per day, eventually growing to two or three posts a day. These posts will be 80 percent business-related and 20 percent personal.

That's it. You can create a more complex and detailed strategy if you wish, but don't hesitate to start very simple, take action, and then adapt as you go.

Always utilize hashtags for every post. This involves your posts in ongoing conversations, which helps people find your content. Plus, it helps you to find potential viewers. Click on a hashtag, and you will see a list of other posts and pages that you can engage with. Reply to their posts, comment, and start conversations.

This works on Twitter. It works on Instagram. In fact, you can do this anywhere you find a hashtag. Even YouTube has a hashtag function now. The hashtag is one of the easiest ways to find specific groups, audiences, and niches, and one of the easiest ways for people to find you.

Frequently visit other influencers' comments to engage with their audience. One of the best ways to find the tribes you want is by looking at the tribes of influencers who are like you. For value-added engagement, respond to comments, interact with their viewers, and answer questions.

Gary Vaynerchuk, well-known authority on business and social media strategy, got his first start on his *Wine Library TV* YouTube channel back in the 2000s. One of his early strategies was to go onto other people's blogs and online forums and respond to comments about wine. He shared his opinions, offered advice and information, and engaged in conversation. He didn't overtly promote his own business or videos; he just added value to ongoing conversations. His goal was to create connections and add real value to people just for the chance they might click on his profile and discover his video content.

Ask yourself what value you add for others. Do you contribute to conversations in meaningful ways? Do you utilize the value you create to

build relationships, gain attention for yourself, and lead them to your channel?

Social Media Power Tip: Utilize live video on social media. Right now, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube are all actively promoting live broadcasts, so it's a good idea to ride the wave. On Facebook, the algorithm favors live video. On Instagram, a small red banner appears over a user's avatar to let people know when someone goes live. Naturally, because you're on live, there's a greater chance of engagement with viewers, and when the YouTube algorithm sees a high amount of engagement, it will move that video higher in search results.

Smart influencers use social media to grow and diversify their influence across multiple social media platforms. If you'd like to dive deeper for even more specific social media tactics, check out the video at TubeSecretsBook.com/Social.

In the next chapter, we'll show you how to get your target audience to come to your channel. Are you ready? Let's continue the journey.

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CHAPTER 9

DISCOVERABILITY: ATTRACT YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE ON AUTOPILOT

"The best place to hide a dead body is on page two of Google."
Businesses and brands understand the importance of getting their website and content to show up on the first page of search results. Becoming the answer to their target audience's inquiries can make or break a business. Getting to the first page means the difference between moderate or massive success.

Google remains the number one search engine for just about everything, but very few people know what the second largest search engine is. Can you guess? Is it Bing? Is it Yahoo? No, actually, it's YouTube. People forget that YouTube is essentially a search engine. This search capability presents a massive opportunity for you to get discovered.

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WHAT IS DISCOVERABILITY?

When someone searches for something relevant to your channel on YouTube's search bar, you want your video to show up in the first few results. If one of your videos shows up high on the list of recommended videos, then you can get views and subscribers whether you post new content or not.

For example, on Benji's cooking channel, he posted a video about creating green smoothies. If you go to the YouTube search bar and type in "fastest green juice recipe," his video will show up at one of the top spots in the search results. Try it for yourself and see. This is cool, of course, but let's dive a few layers deeper. At the time of writing, his video was getting 2.9 views per hour. When you add that up, that's 69.6 views per day, which adds up to 25,404 views per year.

One huge thing to note here is that this video is over three years old. Benji spent time creating that video one time, but it continues to work for him, getting discovered by as many as seventy new people per day. That is the power of climbing to the top of the search results, so don't neglect strategically optimizing your videos for search if you want to build your influence.

Would it benefit you to get your brand's business or YouTube channel seen by seventy new people a day for free? We're not talking about paid advertising. We're not talking about putting gas in your car and driving through your neighborhood, going door-to-door to generate awareness for a product or a service. We're not talking about hiring a PR company to promote you. What we're talking about is tapping into this free platform called YouTube and leveraging the massive discoverability factor of getting your content to show up into search results.

This isn't something you should only do occasionally. Climbing the search rankings needs to be part of your ongoing growth strategy. If you go to YouTube and type in "cheap cameras for YouTube," you'll discover one of Sean's videos has gotten over 1.7 million views in a little over a year. If you go to YouTube and type in "productivity tips," you'll discover an old video

from Sean’s personal channel that was featured in Success Magazine because it ranked in search. How can you do the same for your videos?

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ENHANCING DISCOVERABILITY

Let’s take a look at a few ways you can enhance your own videos, so they rank higher in search results. What we’re actually talking about is called video SEO (search engine optimization), which refers to the process of optimizing your videos to make them generate interest not only with your current subscribers but also with YouTube’s search engine. When you utilize SEO, you make it easier for the search engine to know if that video is relevant to viewers’ searches.

The three most important aspects of video SEO for YouTube are your title, your description, and the tags you add to your video. Get these right, and your videos will start climbing the ranks.

Discovery starts with figuring out what people search for. Once you know that, it will affect both the videos you create and the SEO for those videos. To enhance your video discoverability, ask yourself what the top ten to twenty questions are that your target audience might be searching for on YouTube.

One practical way of doing this is by using the YouTube search bar itself. If you’ve been using YouTube for long, you may have noticed that when you start typing something into the YouTube search bar, it provides a list of pop-up predictions underneath your search.

What you might not realize is that those predictions come from what people around the world are searching for. They represent the most searched terms related to whatever you’re typing in. For instance, if you type “how to cook bacon” in the search bar, the predictions that pop up will represent different recipes that people like to search for.

To take advantage of this feature, figure out what your target audience is searching for by looking at the search bar predictions and create content that addresses those topics, questions, or inquiries in a relevant way.

Don’t try to cover too many topics in one video. Rather than trying to make a video about ten different breakfast recipes, make ten different videos, each

one focused on one specific recipe. Instead of a video covering all kinds of breakfast cooking topics, make one video on cooking bacon, another on making fresh-squeezed orange juice, and another on cooking the perfect eggs. Often, content creators go too broad. You'll get far better results by creating narrowly focused videos to address specific questions that your audience is asking.

To continue with our bacon example, make sure you create a title based on the exact phrase YouTube predicted and include variations of that same phrase in your description, as well as the tags. For example, Benji titled his video, "The Easiest Way to Cook Bacon." In the description, he included variations of that same phrase, and the tags included things like "how to cook bacon," "bacon in the oven," and "bacon tutorial."

If you're in the fitness niche, you could create a workout video with a title like, "How to Get a Fit Body for Men at Home." To stretch your content further, break that video into multiple, smaller videos, each focusing on more specific topics like "Men's Bicep Workout," "Men's Leg Workout for Mass," and "Men's Shoulder Workout Routine." By breaking that one long video into three smaller, more specific videos, you create three different ways for people to discover your content.

If you go to the YouTube search bar and type in, "How to stay motivated," followed by a space, YouTube will provide numerous nuanced predictions like "How to stay motivated to lose weight," "How to stay motivated to work out," "How to stay motivated on YouTube," "How to stay motivated to study," and "How to stay motivated in tough times." Notice that each of those provide dramatically different video ideas. While one might apply to fitness, another applies to the Video Influencers niche: how to stay motivated on YouTube. Use this method to discover some strategic video ideas that will help get your content discovered on YouTube searches.

You can do this in any niche, because people ask questions about practically every topic. Your goal is to discover what those searchable video ideas are and create quality, strategic content around those terms.

Another aspect of discoverability on YouTube that you can tap into is suggested or related videos. When you invest the time in making sure your

SEO details are accurate, specific, relevant, and honest, YouTube will reward you by sharing your content in their suggested list of videos. These appear in a sidebar on desktop computers, below the video on mobile, or at the end of the video a person is currently watching.

For our channel, Video Influencers, YouTube suggested videos are responsible for 40 percent of the half a million views our channel gets every month. Additionally, search brings in 35 percent, so that means 75 percent of our monthly traffic comes from these two sources. Don’t cut corners on SEO, because you don’t want to miss out on the opportunity to get your videos listed in the suggested video list.

YouTube also provides viewers with a list of recommended videos that they believe the individual viewer will be interested in. They base this list on each viewer’s watch history and the things they’ve searched for. The videos listed here aren’t necessarily from channels they are already subscribed to, which makes it another great opportunity to get discovered. Again, you optimize this opportunity by making sure your description and tags address specific questions or terms that people are searching for. Use the right search term, get your SEO down, and your content will be regularly recommended to new viewers.

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OPTIMIZE CONTENT BEFORE YOU CREATE IT

To incorporate discoverability into your overall video strategy, first research your video ideas to determine if there is widespread interest. You can use the YouTube search bar for this. Simply enter the terms and look at the predicted responses. Another great tool is called the Google Keyword Planner. It's free, though you need to set up a Google AdWords account and connect it to a credit card. This tool shows you how many people per month search for various topics and reveals common keywords and phrases for each specific niche. As you can imagine, this information is powerful because it gives you real data about how popular your video idea is. Use this to help you come up with new video ideas you might not have considered or to tweak your existing ideas to better suit what people actually want to see.

A huge mistake we see people make is recording videos and trying to optimize them afterward. We believe you should reverse that order. Strategically plan the optimization of your video before you press record. That way, you'll be able to create the most relevant content possible for that exact search term.

For example, let's say you were in the lifestyle and beauty niche, and you created an advanced makeup tutorial but titled it 'easiest makeup' because you found that title in your research. That wouldn't be strategic, because your content is not in alignment with what the viewer is looking for. That example might seem obvious, but it's those types of subtle nuances that will make or break this strategy. Google and YouTube want to serve their users the best possible content for their inquiries, so the more aligned your content becomes with those answers, the higher your content will rank.

This focus on video SEO needs to happen from day one, before you have a single subscriber. In fact, SEO should be a priority from the moment you begin planning your channel. If you build it into the foundation of your channel, you will generate more traffic long-term. A well-designed video with a focus on SEO will continue to get recommended long after you've forgotten about it.

Practice makes progress. As you begin to incorporate video SEO into your content, you'll get better and better. **However, the best video SEO in the world won't do any good if your content isn't good.** Valuable and engaging content that has been strategically positioned and optimized is a combo that can't be beat.

We cannot emphasize enough how powerful it is to climb high in the search rankings. In fact, using this strategy alone, Sean grew his YouTube channel to over 500,000 subscribers and built a full-time income. What he did was focus on creating consistent quality content that was strategically positioned to leverage the power of YouTube as a search engine. You can do the same.

Once you start to climb in the rankings, garnering more views and getting discovered, you open the door to collaboration with other successful YouTubers. That's what we'll look at next.

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CHAPTER 10

COLLABORATION: GROW YOUR AUDIENCE EXPONENTIALLY

"Competition makes us faster, collaboration makes us better."

MAHFUZ ALI SHUVRA

In the early '90s, West Coast hip-hop grew in popularity and authority on the music scene. In 1992, the classic single *Nuthin' but a G Thang* reached number two on the Billboard Hot 100 and number one on the Hot R&B and Hip-Hop charts. The song was a duet by American rappers Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg from Dre's debut solo album, *The Chronic*. It elevated Snoop Dogg to a wider audience and gained him tremendous exposure. As impressive as he was when guesting on Dre's *The Chronic*, few guessed he'd go on to global fame, millions in record sales, and a career in movies and TV.

Interestingly, Snoop Dogg has sole songwriting credit on *Nuthin' but a G Thang*. Dre provided the larger platform and audience, while Snoop brought his talent for writing chart-topping songs. The collaboration proved to be a huge win for both artists.

Collaborations can be powerful in art, music, film, business, and YouTube. Smart influencers don't sit back and hope for results. They act intentionally in cultivating powerful relationships and pursuing collaborations.

There’s no better way to get people to take interest in you than someone they trust and love referring you to them. Because of this, we believe collaborating is one of the fastest ways to grow your viewership, second only to viral video.

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COLLABORATING WITH OTHER CREATORS

There are three main benefits of collaboration.

- It exposes you to a new audience. The influencers you collaborate with often have already established an audience within a specific demographic or tribe of viewers.
- It spreads out the work. When you collaborate, sometimes you cut the work of video creation in half and multiply the success.
- It helps you learn. Pharrell Williams, musician and entrepreneur, said, ‘Collaborate with people that you can learn from.’

Additionally, collaboration expands your network and leads to friendships and business relationships.

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THE QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN A COLLABORATOR

What qualities should you look for in a good collaborator? Make sure they have some level of alignment with your niche. We discourage people from working with other YouTubers simply because they're famous. If their audience doesn't align with yours, collaboration won't drive the right exposure to your content. For instance, if you have a tech channel focused on photography, cameras, and lighting, you don't want to collaborate with someone who has a cooking channel. It could be fun, but it might not be the best way to get in front of your target audience or generate the right kind of exposure.

However, just because someone has a different type of content, doesn't mean their audience isn't relevant. For example, let's say there's a YouTube influencer who specifically focuses on NFL news and information, and suppose your channel shares game day recipes for football fans. Though these channels offer different kinds of content, the audience aligns through a mutual interest in football. Consider the general interest and lifestyle of the audience of a potential collaboration channel. Even if your channel focus differs from that of a potential collaborator, their audience might still find it relevant and exciting.

When considering a potential collaboration, get familiar with their content and values. Watch their past videos, check out their social media feeds, and evaluate their audience. Look at their YouTube channel, and if you can't find any collaborations, it might indicate that they don't heavily engage in it. That doesn't mean you shouldn't reach out, but it's something to bear in mind. On the other hand, if you discover they've done numerous collaborations, then the chances of getting them to work with you are much higher.

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WHY WOULD PEOPLE COLLABORATE WITH A NEWBIE?

You're just starting out. You don't have a large audience yet. Why would anybody want to collaborate with you?

First of all, you can add value to their channel by providing more content. Even if you're relatively unknown, creators love when you contribute to their channel. Adding value isn't just about the content itself. You can also save them time. Established creators often struggle to find enough time to create all of the content they want to create. By helping them out, you give them a great reason to collaborate, even if your audience is small. Offer to help with setting up the shoot or editing the video.

Second, maybe you have special skills, knowledge, experience, or authority that will allow you to do things with their content that they can't do on their own. For example, on his channel, Benji talks about cooking and shopping for food; however, it's impossible for him to know everything. Oftentimes, he collaborates with other creators who have way more knowledge than he does about specific topics. When talking about the difference between organic and conventional foods, he collaborated with Rawbrahs, brothers who live a natural food lifestyle (even though they had a relatively smaller audience) because they are far more knowledgeable on the topic of organic food. Thanks to their expertise, that content not only provided great value for Benji's viewers, but also allowed Rawbrahs to do much of the heavy lifting in terms of the content, not to mention the cross promotion to both audiences.

Third, you might provide fresh ideas for another YouTuber. Any creator who has been around a long time knows that coming up with creative ideas can be challenging. A new YouTuber brings fresh ideas for their channel, which is a huge relief to an established channel in danger of becoming stagnant.

Fourth, you can provide technical support. Just because someone is a full-time YouTuber doesn't mean they know how to use all the tools of the

trade. Many famous YouTubers use simple point-and-shoot cameras. If you're a photographer or videographer, if you have access to high-quality gear, you present an opportunity for them to have a more highly produced piece of content.

Collaboration is how we, the Video Influencers, connected. When we met, Sean discovered that Benji and his wife were established YouTubers, whereas Sean was focused more on video production and behind-the-scenes work. It led to a great collaboration. Sean brought a unique set of skills, and, as we mentioned in Chapter 6, we worked on a project together called *The Wedding Series* that ended up being a win-win for us. Benji worked in front of the camera and Sean served as director and videographer behind the camera, a team dynamic that laid the foundation for Video Influencers.

Don't ever hesitate to reach out, even if you're just starting. We forget most people like to help others, and it never hurts to ask. Asking doesn't guarantee you're going to get a yes, but not asking guarantees you never will.

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FINDING AND REACHING OUT TO COLLABORATORS

Create a list of people you would love to collaborate with. We use Google Docs to keep up with our ever-growing list of people we want to interview. This puts them all in one place, so we can strategically reach out to them on a regular basis. People are busy these days, and their inboxes and social media feeds are crowded. We recommend checking with people once a quarter or twice a year. Cycle through your list.

Power Tip: The more people you reach out to for collaboration, the higher the chances of getting a yes.

When searching for other creators on YouTube, the best chance for success typically comes from channels the same size as yours. Of course, everybody wants to collaborate with bigger, more successful channels, but those people get far more requests. Someone with an audience the same size as yours is more likely to respond positively. Having said that, remember that audience size isn't as important as shared audience interests and similar content chemistry.

The best way to collaborate with a larger or more successful YouTuber is to approach them with an interview request. With an interview, you don't position yourself as a peer. Instead, you position yourself as someone who's going to help them share their information, wisdom, advice, and insight with a wider audience. It requires a low level of commitment from them. Make it even easier by using an online tool like Google Hangouts, which is free in the backend of your YouTube Creator Studio. That allows you to interview people from anywhere in the world and share that interview on your YouTube channel.

The interview method has worked great for us. Not only have we interviewed channels of similar size, but we've managed to get creators with much larger audiences as well. When we only had 10,000 subscribers on our Video Influencers channel, we were able to get content creators with multiple millions of subscribers to agree to interviews.

One of the ways we got the “yes” was by focusing on adding as much value as possible. For example, if a creator was writing a book, we shared information about the book with our audience. Our goal was to provide a high-quality interview, promote their content and projects, and hustle as hard as we could to share the interview, so we could honor the time they took to do the interview with us. Another great way to reach potential collaborators is through events. In the YouTube space, live events like VidCon, Playlist Live, CVX Live, VidSummit, Video Marketing World, and ClamourCon continue to grow in popularity. They present great opportunities to meet people you would love to collaborate with. If you’re intentional and strategic, you can set up collaborations ahead of time and record them during these events.

Also, by attending events, you can network and plant the seeds for future collaborations. Get involved in local events as well, even if they aren’t directly related to your niche, because they provide opportunities to meet new people you might want to collaborate with later on.

We always look for local social media, video production, small business, and entrepreneurship events, and through them, we have created many important relationships. Most of our collaborations happen during these events, and often, we set them up on the day of the event. If people are willing to spend the time, money, and effort to attend a special event, there’s a high chance they’re also open to an invitation to shoot a collaboration video or be interviewed on the spot.

Earlier, we talked about the power of batch-producing content by shooting multiple videos at a time. Events are great for this. At a recent event in Palm Springs, ClamourCon, we shot twenty interviews in two days. It was a lot of work, and we didn’t have much brain power left by the end of the second day. However, we left the convention with twenty weeks’ worth of videos created from one batch. So, while attending an event might cost a lot of time and money, the payoff can exceed what you spend.

There are a few ways to reach out to people you’d like to collaborate with. The first one is Twitter. We love using Twitter because it’s an appropriate platform to talk to anybody. Think about how you might creatively tweet other influencers to set up possible collabs.

Another great option is direct messaging. In particular, using Instagram DMs has become quite effective. Bear in mind, when you message somebody who doesn't follow you, your message might end up in their spam folder. Don't let that stop you. Many people check their spam folders periodically, so they might find your message. If you message a hundred people, a handful could say yes. That makes the effort worthwhile.

Most YouTube channels have an email address specifically for business inquiries on their "About" page. Also, look for Facebook groups or other online communities where influencers in your niche gather. These are great places to discover people to build relationships with.

Whichever strategy you use, never adopt an aggressive approach. Consider how you can reach out creatively, how you can get noticed without being forceful, weird, or generic. When people reach out to collaborate with us, one of the quickest ways to get ignored is if it's obvious they're simply copying and pasting the same message to multiple people. We love it when it's apparent people have watched our content, have knowledge about our body of work, and reach out in thoughtful and personal ways. That increases the chances of us collaborating with them.

Power Tip: One of the biggest mistakes we see people make when reaching out for collaborations is only focusing on themselves. Don't do this. Instead, position the "ask" based on how you can add value to the other person, not what's in it for you.

People have been collaborating on YouTube since the beginning, and many have experienced massive success as a result. Never be afraid to approach a popular YouTuber and ask—you never know who might say yes.

One of my favorite collaborations started with someone canceling a collaboration. We flew to New York City to interview a well-known influencer. The morning of the interview, that person's schedule changed, so they had to cancel our meeting. We'd come a long way, so the situation was frustrating, as you can imagine.

However, it was what we did the day before that made it all worthwhile. When we'd arrived in the city, we had emailed another creator, knowing

they also lived in New York City. Remember, it never hurts to ask. We were surprised to learn that the other creator was more than willing to meet with us. His name? Casey Neistat, winner of GQ's New Media Star in 2016, Best First-Person Series Online from the Streamy Awards in 2016, and a YouTuber with over 9 million subscribers.

He invited us to his studio, where we conducted the interview. He also shouted out the interview on his channel and linked to it, in front of all of his subscribers. A day that started off as a disappointment turned out to be a huge opportunity.

Collaborations are super powerful. Start cultivating those opportunities right now, but don't get discouraged if they don't happen right away. These things take time. However, in the next chapter, we'll share a strategy that you can do right now to start growing your YouTube channel faster than ever before.

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CHAPTER 11

TRENDS & TENTPOLES: CONSPIRE WITH THE CULTURE

"You need to go where the opportunity will be next, not where it is."

JEREMY GUTSCHE

We live in an age of viral memes, video challenges, and internet hyper-trends, of the Harlem Shake, Planking, and the Mannequin Challenge. One popular internet trend was called The Ice Bucket Challenge, sometimes called the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. This activity involved dumping a bucket of ice water over a person's head to promote awareness for the disease Atrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). It went viral on social media during July through August of 2014. It took the internet by storm and helped raise $115 million for research, helping scientists discover a new gene tied to ALS.

While many internet trends may seem wacky and random, participation can be a very smart strategy for content creators. On YouTube, timing is everything. Holidays, seasons, viral videos, popular songs, current movies, and events all create opportunities for relevant content. Incorporate them to ride the momentum and exposure these trends produce.

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WHAT'S A TREND?

A trend is a viral moment happening in internet culture. Once a trend sparks interest, it spreads like wildfire throughout the internet. We already mentioned a few relatively recent examples, like the Harlem Shake, Planking, and the Mannequin Challenge. If you're not familiar with them, take a moment to search for examples on YouTube. Other trends include popular products, such as fidget spinners and hover boards.

Smart influencers jump on trends by incorporating them into their content or doing product reviews and monetizing them through affiliate marketing. When fidget spinners gained popularity with young people, smart YouTubers found all sorts of creative ways to use these simple little toys to gain greater exposure.

Gossip about current events can also create trends. One of the most famous and longest-standing YouTubers, Philip DeFranco, has capitalized on this since the beginning of his YouTube channel. Philip DeFranco's channel covers news and topic-of-the-day content, and he does it very well. He's great at researching to find the most viral headlines or gossip topics of the moment. Then he talks about the topics and provides his own personal insights. Because he connects to trending topics, many people find his videos without being subscribed to the channel. That one simple strategy has grown his audience to more than 5 million subscribers and garnered him over 2 billion views.

Lastly, you can jump on current events that tie into your industry. For instance, in 2017, Samsung had huge issues with their Galaxy Note 7 phones blowing up. Literally blowing up. They were so prone to exploding that they were banned from airplanes. While this created horrible news for Samsung, smart influencers in the technology niche jumped on this in the form of commentary and comedy, riding the wave of its popularity and shareability. YouTuber JerryRigEverything posted a video of a phone actually exploding and got over 7.2 million views on this one video alone.

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HOW TO CAPITALIZE ON A TREND

When it came to the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, content creators from all backgrounds, industries, topics, and professions jumped on it. Not only did it raise awareness for a great cause, but many people found it interesting and entertaining to watch people have freezing cold water poured over their heads. From entrepreneurs to celebrities, musicians, and stay-at-home moms, all kinds of people participated.

Even if your industry is highly professional, you should still consider jumping on these kinds of cultural trends. Never forget that people do business with people. If you let your hair down and show your staff having a little fun and getting a bit crazy, that makes for great content that could be shared on your social media platforms or on your YouTube channel.

Even though we advised you to focus on your niche, the great thing about a trend like The Ice Bucket Challenge is that its trendiness makes it applicable to just about any channel. Even if the challenge is off topic, it gives you a way to make a human connection and have fun with the broader culture. Your loyal viewers will be forgiving.

Another way you can capitalize on trends is by covering popular songs or pop culture moments. For example, family vloggers Sam and Nia have grown their channel to over 2 million subscribers. What many people don't know is one of the early reasons their channel grew was because of a viral video they posted of singing "Love Is an Open Door" from Disney's *Frozen* while driving in their family minivan. That video received over 22 million views while they were in the early days of building their influence. Consider how you could incorporate pop culture, music, and movies into your content to achieve a similar result.

You can also capitalize on trends by weaving popular influencers into your content. For example, on Sean's tech channel, *THiNK Media*, he created a video about Casey Neistat's video gear. Casey had posted a video that gave a generic overview of his gear, but it didn't go into detail. Sean saw the video and realized that other people would be interested in a complete breakdown, so he made that video. He provided a specific, detailed

description of the gear Casey used and posted it the day after Casey posted his own video. That video went on to get over 330,000 views because it helped people find the video gear details they wanted. It also provided exposure for Sean's channel, which is focused on camera gear and video accessories.

Always look for ways to integrate trends into your regular content. Anytime a trend hits popular culture, ask yourself, "How can I capitalize on this trend while staying on brand?" For example, if you have a recipe channel, what are some trending recipes you could integrate into your content? One trend that gained popularity in the entrepreneur community was "bulletproof coffee," which entailed adding butter and MCT-oil to your daily coffee, for its brain-enhancing effects. As the coffee recipe began to grow in popularity, smart YouTube creators took advantage of the trend and many of the videos they created received 20,000 to over 2 million views!

Look at what's trending on social media in your niche and incorporate it. Be intentional and strategic about how you weave trends, viral content, and cultural events into your content. Don't forget that speed matters when it comes to trends. As soon as you see the opportunity, act fast so you can get your content out before the wave crashes.

Bonus Tip: To see what videos are trending on YouTube just go to youtube.com/trending. Who knows, you might discover a trend that you can leverage in your own content.

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WHAT IS A TENT-POLE?

We've talked about trends and their power to help you grow your influence on YouTube, but you should also pay close attention to tent-poles. What is a tent-pole?

A tent-pole is a way of capitalizing on recurring events and holidays throughout the year. For example, let's look at Halloween. People get interested in Halloween months before it occurs. That is the beginning of the tent-pole. When interest peaks, that's the center of the tent. That's the time when the most searches are done. This typically occurs right around the actual holiday. After the day passes, interest falls dramatically and quickly. In the case of Halloween, interest builds throughout October, peaks on the 31st, then drops off almost immediately the very next day.

Holidays comprise the most obvious tent-pole events: New Year's, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and sometimes-overlooked holidays like Mother's Day, Father's Day, even Labor Day or Memorial Day. Every single one of these holidays provides an opportunity to create and schedule strategic, relevant content on your channel.

Outside of holidays, major cultural events can become tent-poles. Examples include the Super Bowl or the Academy Awards. Basically, any major cultural event creates an opportunity for YouTubers to create relevant content as interest rises. Try to keep up with relevant cultural events, like elections, the next big Star Wars movie, or anything else generating interest. The seasons are tent-poles, so if you have a lifestyle or a fashion channel, consider creating video content around seasonal outfit ideas.

Outside of holidays and cultural events, popular industry-specific events can also become tent-poles. CES is one of the largest electronics expos in the world. If you have a tech channel, it's a perfect niche event you can capitalize on. Even if you can't attend the event, you can still create relevant content and commentary in the days leading up to it. Take advantage of the event hashtag on Twitter, Instagram, and other social

media platforms. Join the conversation before, during, and after the event. This maximizes awareness and exposure for your channel.

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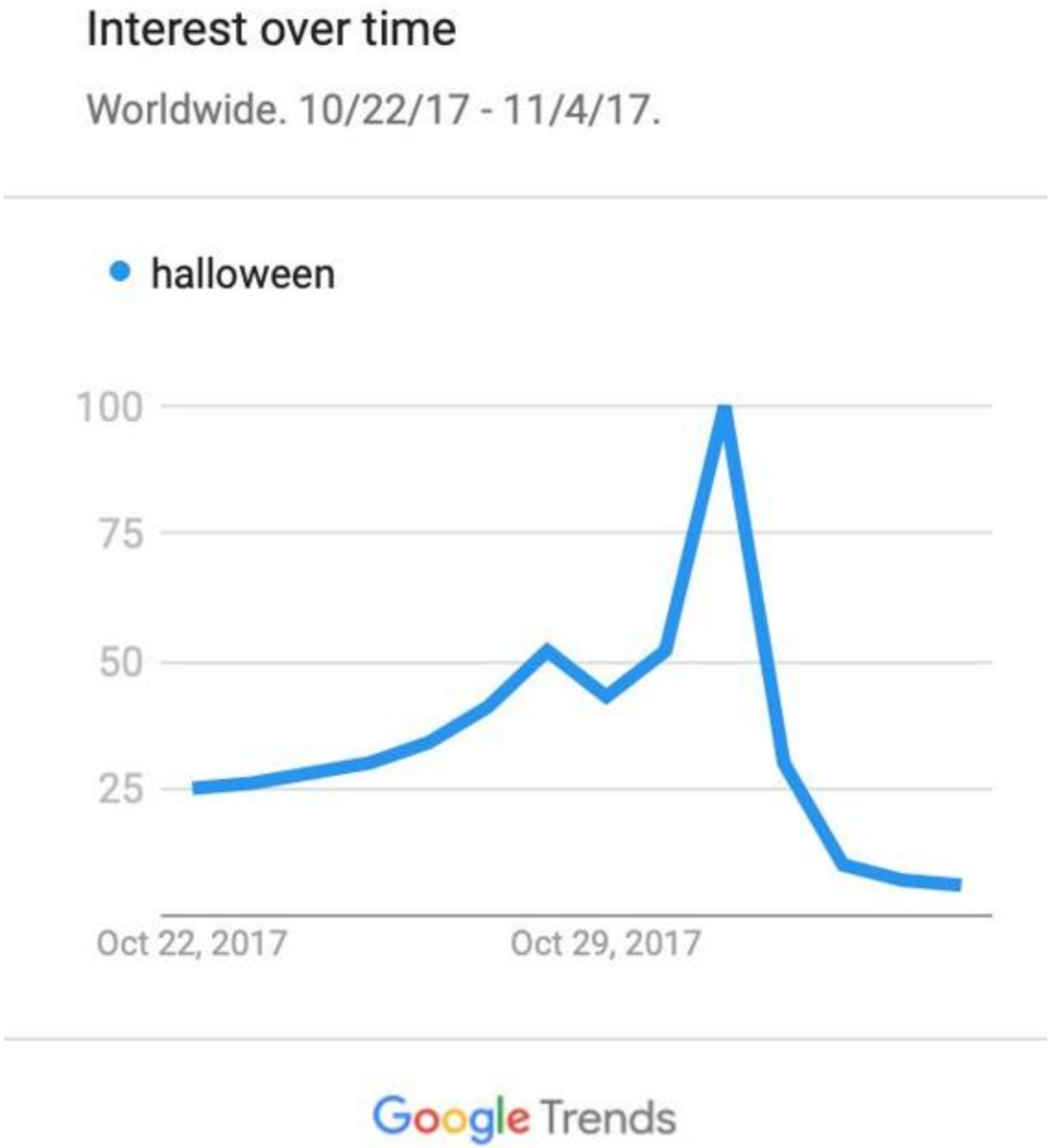
TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A TENT-POLE

The most important aspect of an effective tent-pole strategy is to jump on a topic early in the tent-pole journey. So, if you're creating content around Halloween, don't wait for interest to peak. That's too late. Start posting relevant content when people begin searching for Halloween costumes, Halloween recipes, Halloween *anything*. That happens a few weeks to a couple months before the actual holiday. When you post relevant content early, you beat other creators to the punch, which means you have less competition for views and more time to gain momentum when searches are highest, better positioning yourself for ranking.

A great tool for tent-pole strategizing is Google trends (trends.google.com). This tool shows, with precise specificity, when the interest and search traffic begins, accelerates, peaks, and diminishes for holidays, cultural events, and trends of any kind. Additionally, consider combining other strategies we've shared in this chapter. For example, if you want to collaborate with another YouTuber, schedule it around a tent-pole to enhance and strengthen the value of the trend.

Lastly, remember, fortune favors the fast. Plan your tent-pole strategy far in advance and have a strategic content calendar to jump on trends and tent-poles as early as possible. Sometimes life gets busy, so you will miss a few events now and then. Still, we encourage you to do whatever you can to make the most of the big tent-pole events, even if that means canceling plans, staying up late, or pushing yourself to get content done.



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EXERCISE: TREND AND TENT-POLE LIST

Write down a few creative ideas for tent-poles and trends in your niche. On Sean's tech channel, that means including things like Cyber Monday and Black Friday. Knowing those events happen in late November, Sean starts planning and preparing the content in October, if not earlier. Benji, as a food enthusiast, considers different recipes for Thanksgiving and Christmas early in the fall to take advantage of early searches.

By planning early, you can release content at the beginning of each tent-pole for maximum exposure and views.

If you're using YouTube for business, what industry events could you weave into your content? If you're in the lifestyle and beauty niche, consider creating videos about the looks and styles of trending celebrities. Strategically plan your videos as fashion fads change.

No matter what niche you're in, trends and tent-poles drive new awareness to your YouTube channel, but they certainly aren't the only way. In the next chapter, we will discuss a behind-the-scenes strategy for scaling and growing your influence and creating more content on YouTube through the power of teamwork.

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CHAPTER 12

TEAM: SCALE YOUR VISION

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.”
MICHAEL JORDAN

Why do birds fly in a V formation? As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. When you surround yourself with people who share a common direction and sense of community, you can get where you desire to go much easier, because you travel on the thrust, energy, and momentum of one another.

By now, you’ve realized that YouTube and social media take a lot of work. Though many people get started on YouTube individually, we recommend thinking about building a team from day one. In this chapter, we’re going to share some thoughts, ideas, and tips on how to do that.

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FINDING A TEAM WHEN YOU'RE STARTING OUT

We've never met a super successful influencer who didn't have a team, whether that means a personal assistant, a cameraman, a talent manager, or a full-on production studio. Your team is whoever supports you in building your YouTube channel, especially when you have other priorities that divide your time. Do you have a day job? Are you going to school? Do you have a family to take care of? Then you need to think about creating a team. Friends and family can absolutely be your teammates. Do you have a spouse who helps pay the bills or take care of the kids? That's your team.

One of the biggest mistakes creators make is not to communicate a compelling and unifying vision with those closest to them. Have you shared your vision for building your influence online with your family and friends? Have you asked and given practical ways in which they could support you? Initially, building a team is not about hiring people. It's about enlisting people already in your sphere of influence.

Unless you already possess the resources to hire a team, your first hires must be practical and low cost. What are the tasks the people in your life could help you accomplish? Additionally, consider ways to optimize and offload things from your schedule. For instance, maybe a meal delivery service like Blue Apron would save you a few hours a day, so you can work on your YouTube channel.

Benji served as his wife Judy's first team member, serving as a business manager and personal assistant. However, when the channel got more successful, they both found they were too busy to complete simple tasks around the home, so he began looking for help with basic chores.

His first hire was a kid in the neighborhood who wanted to make some extra money. Benji had mentored him in a program at the YMCA, and he knew the kid didn't have a lot of opportunity for work because of his age. He paid him ten bucks to mow the front and back yard. This was still early enough in Benji's YouTube career that saving time with something as

simple as landscaping was a huge help. Ten years later, that same kid, all grown up, works as a full-time production assistant for him.

Who in your immediate surroundings could help take over some daily tasks for you? When *THiNK Media* began to grow, Sean asked a friend from church if he would be interested in helping to edit his videos. He had expressed interest before, so it was a perfect match in Sean's eyes. This turned into a summer internship. The friend worked in exchange for training and information. Not only was it a win-win situation, but it was a value exchange rather than a money exchange.

Sean thought outside of the box. When it comes to enlisting support, you must be open to new, creative, and unique opportunities like this.

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NEXT STEPS IN TEAMBUILDING

Once you're a bit further along, it's time to consider the next step in building your team. If you've accrued a little money, you can consider outsourcing services like graphic design or closed-captioning.

Closed-captioning, or subtitling, your videos makes them viewable to a wider audience around the world and ensures they rank in YouTube searches. If you tried to closed-caption your own videos, it would take a long time, so we recommend using services like Rev.com, which costs only a dollar a minute.

Need some graphic design updates for your YouTube thumbnails, cover images, or social media images? Fiverr.com has services as low as $5 per job for all of your graphic design needs. You can even hire a virtual assistant on a site like Upwork.com. You don't have to hire someone for an insane amount of time. Hire help for just five hours a week, delegating tasks you aren't good at or don't enjoy.

Where in your life can you buy yourself more time to focus on what's most important? First, list the priorities for your channel, whether that's filming, editing, optimization, distribution, engagement, sustaining cash flow, branding, email, general inquiries, customer service, or managing a team.

Second, list the tasks that you tend to procrastinate in doing. Now, compare the two lists and note which tasks appear on both of them. Look at the tasks that are ranked the highest. That's where you need to start your outsourcing.

Consider how affordable outsourcing is. If your normal hourly rate in your professional life is $20 an hour (and we'd argue your time is worth much more than that), and it takes you two hours to edit a video, then you could say it costs you $40 to edit a single video. If you hire an editor who will work for $15 an hour, assuming they can also edit the same video in two hours, then you've saved yourself $5 an hour. Now you can spend those two hours focusing on your strengths and generating more income.

Most people, when they start making a little money, spend it on things and experiences. While that is great, if you are serious about scaling your business and brand on YouTube, we recommend investing your extra money by leveraging the skills of others to do more work than you could do on your own.

One of Sean's early hires was a person he met on Twitter who expressed interest in learning about video. However, they met at a time when he was unable to pay her any money. Fortunately, she didn't need a job. She only wanted to learn about online video and how to start earning a side income with YouTube. They entered into an agreement where she would receive a percentage based off the money earned from helping with Sean's YouTube channel. This was great because she was willing to embrace the risk of not getting paid, but if she did good work and performance increased, then she would get paid. The relationship started simple, but they were able to grow together because teamwork helps you grow faster, increase revenue, and ultimately experience more success. The risk paid off for her, and today, she is a full-time member of Sean's team.

To find help, reach out to people on social media. Make a Facebook post, let people know you're looking for someone interested in an internship. Consider looking for creative professionals in your area on LinkedIn. Get the word out among your friends and acquaintances. You never know what could happen. Don't limit yourself to conventional ways of thinking about teambuilding. Our channel (and this book) is evidence that there are many people in the world who are interested in succeeding on YouTube. You'd be surprised how many are looking for experience and are willing to work for free for the opportunity to learn. You may be able to find some of those people in your own community. In fact, they may already be subscribed to your channel and following you.

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OTHER SUPPORT SYSTEMS YOU SHOULD CULTIVATE

When we talk about teams, we're not just referring to the people who work directly to help you produce content. We also believe in having a winning circle of friends and mentors who help encourage you along the way.

Motivational speaker Jim Rohn famously said, "We are the average of the five people we spend the most time with."

After interviewing many video influencers, as well as associating with many successful entrepreneurs, we've noticed that they are all intentional about surrounding themselves with a world-class circle of geniuses. They want people around them who think big, challenge them, and give advice throughout the various stages of growth. You should do the same.

When it comes to surrounding yourself with mentors, there are three levels to consider. First, you have access to mentors through content. That involves reading books, watching videos, and listening to podcasts and other educational resources that inspire you, encourage you to think bigger, and give you the latest information for scaling your vision.

Second, you can attend conferences and industry events, surrounding yourself with like-minded people and expert speakers who will help you level up in every area. We make it a priority to attend multiple conferences in our industry every year. We don't do this simply to create content at those events, but also to meet people and learn from them while we're there.

Like the ancient biblical proverb says, 'As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." In other words, you need other leaders around you who can challenge and prepare you for the next level of success.

Third, you can invest in coaching. This might be as simple as a one-hour Skype call with an industry expert, or you can go much deeper. The bottom line is, you must be highly intentional about surrounding yourself with a support system for every level of your journey toward success.

Being a YouTuber and an entrepreneur can be lonely. Often, it feels like an emotional rollercoaster. There will be times when you're on the top of the world, and other times when you don't want to get out of bed. Creating a circle of success around you is one of the keys for succeeding in every season.

Look at our example. We're both YouTubers. However, we bring different skills and experiences to the table. Benji is a businessman, team builder, and full-time vlogger, while Sean is an expert content producer and digital marketer. We built Video Influencers as a side project over the last three years, and it's become a success because we work as a team. Together, we bring different ideas, so we stand out in a sea of other influencers.

In the next chapter, we will dive deeper into how discovering your unique skills, personality, and perspective can help you achieve greater success on your journey to building an influence, income, and impact with online video.

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CHAPTER 13

THINK DIFFERENTLY: CRUSH CONVENTIONALITY

“If you’re doing what everyone else is doing, you’re doing it wrong.”
CASEY NEISTAT

One of the fastest-growing channels in YouTube’s history was that of Casey Neistat. In a short time, he grew to over 9 million subscribers and took the YouTube world by storm. He brought something new to an established genre, and thus, he not only grew fast, but he also won numerous awards.

Before Casey, people understood “daily vlogging” to be an established genre that included mostly casual videos of the content creator’s life, often shot on simple point-and-shoot cameras with low production values. The strength of vlogging was believed to be the personality of the individual, not the production value of the content.

Casey brought a radically new approach to the genre. First, his camera setup was far beyond the point-and-shoot or smartphone quality that 99 percent of vloggers used. In fact, Casey’s camera rig was outrageous. He also leveraged his exceptional video editing skills to create much higher production values. While most vloggers spend an hour or two editing their vlogs, Casey spends anywhere from four to eight hours (or more) per episode.

Furthermore, Casey’s storytelling ability is unparalleled by most in modern media. Ultimately, he combined over a decade and a half of his life

experiences, video production expertise, and a unique perspective on the world to create something that was new, different, and unique, and his channel grew in popularity very quickly as a result.

Nowadays, at most YouTube conferences, it's common to see vloggers walking around with the 'Casey Neistat vlogging setup.' What once looked outrageous is now the desired camera rig of many vloggers. He changed the genre.

Up to this point in the book, we've given you a framework for success on YouTube. We've given you specific tactics and strategies to help you grow, but we never want you to get the idea that there's only one set way to build your influence on YouTube. We hope we've given you guideposts, best practices, and a tool belt of resources that can get you big results, but ultimately, you need to carve your own path in any creative endeavor.

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STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Often, what makes a channel unique comes from the personal experiences in a creator's life. What are the life experiences, personal or professional relationships, or areas of expertise you can use to make your YouTube channel different? A great example of this is Andru Edwards, a tech influencer who focuses on consumer electronics. He reviews products and shares tips, tricks, and insights on everything tech.

Of course, there are many tech influencers on YouTube, but Andru was also, at one time, a professional wrestler. As a wrestler, he always needed to have high energy, be entertaining, and be ready to perform at a moment's notice. When he first started his tech channel, he utilized these skills and charisma to add more entertainment value to his content.

In addition to that, his branding was unique. As a professional wrestler, being flashy and standing out contributes to a wrestler's brand, so when starting his tech channel, Andru set himself apart with flashy clothes, bright colors, and a fashion swagger most in his niche did not have.

For your channel, you want to combine the best practices of successful YouTubers along with some unique qualities of your own. The world doesn't need another Andru Edwards or Casey Neistat. The world needs you to be fully *you*, so combine your experiences and personality quirks into something creative on YouTube.

YouTuber Sara Dietschy first rose to popularity by creating a parody of how to vlog like Casey Neistat. That video received 1.9 million views, and Casey liked it so much he mentioned it in one of his vlogs, linking to her channel and giving a boost to her growth.

Vlogger Amy Landino from *Savvy Sexy Social* reviewed a book by Gary Vaynerchuk by creating a song and music video, earning Gary's attention. Both Sara and Amy thought differently. As a result, it helped them gain exposure, show appreciation to mentors and influencers in their lives, and build their influence on YouTube.

Just because you're committed to your channel's niche content doesn't mean you can't change the delivery. Even if you've been at it for a while, you can implement some changes to make your content more unique and help the channel grow.

Years ago, JP Sears started a self-help "talking head" channel, and he worked at it for almost two years. He only received a couple thousand video views per upload, so he sought our advice for what to do to accelerate his channel. Instead of telling him to stray from his current path, we advised him to keep it up, because that niche was an underserved part of YouTube.

JP is actually a very funny person, but he didn't think that aspect of his personality fit into his channel. However, he decided to embrace his own uniqueness. Shortly thereafter, Ultra Spiritual JP was born. The character covered the same types of content he'd already created, but he did it in a comedic way. The difference in audience reception was night and day. Viewers loved the new character. The change in delivery allowed him to expand his audience, and his channel grew from a few thousand views per upload to hundreds of millions of views across both YouTube and Facebook.

He didn't change his vision, he just pivoted his content, delivering the value he wanted but with a different presentation, and it made all the difference.

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UP-LEVEL YOUR UNIQUENESS

In our interview with Charlie from *Charisma on Command*, he mentioned that he experienced a boost when he experimented with varying his content formats. Many YouTubers get into a rut, creating only one form of content over and over. They forget that every time they approach YouTube, they're approaching a blank canvas. The only limitation for what they create upon that canvas is their own creativity.

There are so many possibilities when it comes to creating content. Mix it up. One video could be animated with voiceover narration like a "draw my life" video. Another video could include mixed media, such as photos, videos, and music combined in unique ways. Maybe a few of your videos could be live streams. As long as you're delivering the message you want to deliver, play with different formats.

With Video Influencers, we tried to think differently about helping people with online video tips by creating a weekly interview show. While we have many peers who share similar information and educational videos like Video Influencers, no one in our industry had created a weekly interview show up to that point.

The format wasn't unique in other industries. Many podcasts and YouTube channels use the weekly interview format to deliver regular content. But nobody had done it in our niche. That's the key.

How could you think differently about your content format to bring fresh creativity to your niche? How might you borrow innovation and creative ideas from other industries or niches?

One of the best ways to think differently and discover your unique positioning on YouTube is to scratch your own itch. What are the things you search for, and what kind of content do you wish was on YouTube? If it's something you're looking for but can't find, or if it's in a style that you would love but can't find, chances are other people would enjoy it as well. That could be a great guiding marker for you to carve out a unique space on YouTube.

As bestselling author Sally Hogshead said, ‘Different is better than better.’ Being unique is so important, we hope these tips will help you shape your own voice and branding to stand out and grow faster.

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QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR UNIQUENESS

What is oversaturated in your niche? What small tweaks or changes could bring something fresh to a topic that's already established?

What past experience could you combine with your current passion to create a unique channel?

What are your biggest strengths, and are you currently incorporating them into your YouTube content?

What do friends and family love about your personality? Are you fully letting your unique personality shine through on YouTube?

What do you wish was on YouTube? Is there some topic or niche that you personally would love to watch that you haven't been able to find?

Over a billion people watch YouTube, and we believe millions more will come to the platform in the next few years. That means double the views and double the channel opportunities. "There's too much competition," and "It's too late" are excuses we've seen proven wrong time and time again over the last ten years.

As New York Times bestselling author and marketing expert Seth Godin said, 'You can either fit in or stand out, not both.' To stand out, you must embrace your uniqueness, think differently, and pave your own path.

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CONCLUSION

Thomas Edison, revered by many as America's greatest inventor, developed many devices that greatly influenced life around the world, including the phonograph, the motion picture camera, and a long-lasting practical electric light bulb. He's also famous for allegedly saying, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it's dressed in overalls and it looks like work."

In this book, we hope you've seen that we live in one of the greatest times in human history. The opportunity provided by online video to reach and connect with people around the world on free platforms with low-cost tools is something our grandparents could never have dreamed of. However, in times of massive opportunity, it's important to take massive action.

Before we part ways—and you get to work on your channel—we want to share a few final tips and strategies so you can fully seize the opportunity that is before you.

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THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT YOUTUBE SUCCESS

Being a YouTube influencer might look like it's all fun and play. However, we can tell you from experience, every YouTube creator, influencer, and success story has one common attribute: an amazing work ethic. They hustle, hustle, hustle. The number one piece of advice we can provide is that everything comes down to how hard you're willing to work in order to be successful on this platform.

People underestimate the amount of work it takes. The allure of YouTube success is misleading. If you reach success, you can earn money, get free products, travel the world, and live an exciting, exhilarating life. However, that's just what it looks like from the outside.

After interviewing over a hundred of today's top video influencers, we see a recurring theme. All of them put an insane amount of work into their channels. When we talk about hustle, we mean consistency—consistently creating and optimizing your content, consistently engaging with people, consistently improving.

Benji's Vlog channel has over 1.6 million subscribers. Many people watch, and that has opened numerous doors of opportunity for us. He's incredibly grateful for everything that has happened, but after fun days with the kids or traveling to cool places, every night the video editing must happen. Business is taken care of, and it all starts over every day.

When subscribers stumble upon our channel, they don't realize we've been on YouTube for ten years. In that time, we've uploaded thousands of videos. In the last six years, we've vlogged almost every single day of the week. Across both of our channels we have uploaded thousands and thousands of videos. Through determination, commitment, and the right strategy, you too can experience huge success leveraging the power of YouTube. In this book, we've given you the steps.

In part one, we talked about the Seven C's, which you must do continually as you go through the stages of growing your influence on YouTube—

always tapping into a new level of **courage**, always **clarifying** and refining your message and brand, always improving your **channel**, always improving your **content**, always engaging with your **community**, always finding new ways of generating **cash**, and always staying **consistent**, realizing you must hustle your way to success. Then in part two, we shared some actionable tactics and creative ideas for growing your channel, including leveraging trends, ranking your videos, and collaborating with other creative people.

By this point, you'll see that it takes a lot of work to build influence on YouTube, and that's why we encourage you to build it around something you love. "If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life." There will be times when you're tired, and it will feel like a grind, but devoting yourself to something you love will make it all feel worthwhile.

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WHAT DO YOU LOVE?

Is this what you want to be doing? Is this what you're passionate about? For some, YouTube is a means to an end, a stepping stone toward their true calling. However, it's so important to have a passion and love for the content you create and the people you help.

Despite how successful Benji's real estate channel was, he's no longer an agent in that industry. He left because he viewed it as merely a stepping stone in the right direction. It helped fund his true passion, which is helping people…helping *you*. That's why we have become such great friends, because we share a similar passion and calling, and that's why we wrote this book.

Sometimes, things might not work out. If you're struggling, ask yourself if you're truly doing what you love. At this point, you might feel overwhelmed. You've received a lot of information. Break it down and think about the next thing you need to do.

Maybe that's setting up your channel. Maybe that's posting your first video. Maybe it's scheduling a day to shoot your next batch of content. A commitment to these small actions compound to big results. Little by little, a little becomes a lot.

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THE TIMELINE FOR SUCCESS

The timeline is different for everyone, and it depends on your type of content, the makeup of your audience, your business model, the level of hustle you're willing to put in, and how quickly you can learn.

Be ambitious, but never get impatient. As the saying goes, "Overnight success takes ten years." We don't believe it has to take that long, but it might. For some, it could be quick. For others, it could take much longer. Always remember, you are on your own path. Never fall into the trap of comparing yourself to somebody else. Your race is your own.

Jerry from the tech channel *Barnacules Nerdgasm* didn't have breakout success until the seventh year of his career. John Kohler from *Growing Your Greens* had many slow years on YouTube of being consistent before his channel took off and experienced huge growth. It took Judy Travis two years of uploading videos and being denied three times from the YouTube Partners Program before she could monetize her channel. It then took another year before she could make it her full-time career.

Greatness takes time. While we don't believe anything great happens instantly, if you apply the tactics we've given you, you can shave off tons of time, avoid pitfalls, and get the most out of the energy you put in.

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LEARNING DOESN’T STOP HERE

While we may be coming to the end of this book, it’s only the beginning of our journey together. We want to invite you to be a part of the Video Influencers online community.

On our YouTube channel, we share even more strategies and tips. It’s like a YouTube university that is completely free, and you can access it any time. Plus, we encourage you to look at our interviews with other YouTubers, business owners, entrepreneurs, and creatives from around the world to learn their best tips for growing your influence with video.

Additionally, we’ve included in the appendix of this book some of the top questions we receive with a few quick tips and links for deeper training, all available online for free.

Always keep in mind your “why.” Inspiration can be a spark of energy. Motivation can get you pumped up in the morning, but drive is what keeps you going. Drive is created by your why. Why are you creating videos? Why do you want to have a YouTube channel? Why do you want to achieve success on this platform?

Always make serving your audience your top priority and never forget why you started. It’s ultimately not about you. It’s about the people on the other side of the camera lens, on the other side of that internet connection, watching through their devices. You’re ultimately creating content to make a difference in the lives of people, so if you get discouraged, always keep them in mind.

In this book, you’ve learned about the secret society and subculture that is YouTube and the massive opportunity that exists for you right here, right now. We’ve shared with you the tactics of the influencers who are getting results and creating lives, businesses, and brands on their own terms doing what they love, but remember: YouTube is a marathon, not a sprint. Stay focused on your vision. Put in the work. Keep building your influence, income, and impact, one video at a time.

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APPENDIX

We've gotten a ton of questions, and we've done our best to include the best tips and strategies throughout this book. However, some things might not have been included, so we want to share the questions we get most often and provide succinct answers, along with additional resources you can find online.

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HOW DO I GET MORE SUBSCRIBERS AND VIEWS?

This question is, by far, the one we hear most. Our biggest recommendation is to simply apply everything you've just learned in this book. Stick to the strategy and keep working these tactics. If you desire more training, check out this playlist on our YouTube channel.

TubeSecretsBook.com/Grow

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HOW CAN I BUILD CONFIDENCE TO BE ON CAMERA?

The more knowledgeable and passionate you are about the subject, the more confident you'll feel talking about it on camera. Beyond that, practice is essential. The more times you get in front of the camera, record, edit, and upload your videos, the better you'll be. No athlete or musician performs perfectly on their first day, so don't be hard on yourself. Just remember that practice makes progress. Watch our best videos and tips from Nikki Phillippi.

TubeSecretsBook.com/Confidence

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HOW CAN I STAY MOTIVATED WHEN I'M NOT SEEING RESULTS YET?

Greatness takes time, and results don't happen overnight. Like working out at the gym, you don't get immediate, visible results. It takes time and consistency. For our best tips on staying motivated, along with some of the mindset hacks and daily practices that Benji and I use, check out this video playlist.

TubeSecretsBook.com/Motivation

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HOW DO I DEAL WITH HATERS, TROLLS, AND NEGATIVE COMMENTS?

The number one thing you want to do when it comes to dealing with haters, trolls, and negative comments is to mentally prepare yourself for them. They are universal for all creators, from beginning YouTubers to seasoned creators, and even the superstars. Dealing with negative comments is a fact of life. For a few practical strategies on dealing with haters and negativity, check out these videos.

TubeSecretsBook.com/Haters

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HOW DO I BECOME A DAILY VLOGGER?

Year after year, vlogging is growing in popularity, so we totally understand your aspiration to become a daily vlogger. However, it’s not an easy path, and succeeding as a vlogger comes with some unique challenges. The path to becoming a vlogger doesn’t necessarily start as a vlog channel. Most successful vloggers became famous for niche content, then started daily vlogging. If it’s your ambition, check out these interviews with some of today’s top vloggers.

TubeSecretsBook.com/Vlog

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HOW DO I GET MY FIRST 100 SUBSCRIBERS?

Getting your first 100 subscribers can be as easy as asking your family and friends to support you. The average number of friends people have on Facebook is 250. Often, the people willing to support you are only a direct message, email, or phone call away. For some specific strategies for getting your first 100 subscribers on YouTube, check out this video.

TubeSecretsBook.com/First100

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WHICH CAMERA SHOULD I BUY?

While we understand a quality camera is important, content value is always more important than production value. For most people, we recommend starting with your smartphone, which is adequate. The stories you tell and the value you add always supersede the technology you use. The best resource we have for you is Sean's channel, *THiNK Media*, which focuses on video production and equipment. Check out *THiNK Media* here.

TubeSecretsBook.com/ThinkMedia

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HOW DO I COME UP WITH VIDEO IDEAS?

Just as writers experience writer's block, YouTubers experience "video idea block." It's something we all face. We keep a video idea list that we can reference whenever we have "video idea block." If you feel like you're stuck or in a rut when coming up with video ideas, we encourage you check out this series of tips from Video Influencers to refill your video ideas tank.

TubeSecretsBook.com/Ideas

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WHERE CAN I LEARN VIDEO EDITING?

Learning how to edit is as simple as getting started. Benji started with the most basic editing program that was pre-installed on his laptop. He had absolutely no knowledge, but he just started cutting scenes. Practice makes perfect. Many people have created great free tutorials on the majority of popular video editing programs. Just search for them on YouTube. Alternately, you can invest in an educational site like Lynda.com or Skillshare.com. They provide more organized and professional step-by-step tutorials for a nominal fee.

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WHAT ARE YOUR TIPS FOR COLLABORATIONS?

Collaboration is one of the best ways to grow your channel, so we recommend rereading the chapter on collaboration in this book. You might wonder how we've been able to get so many interviews from top video influencers. For specific strategies on getting people to collaborate with you, check out this playlist.

TubeSecretsBook.com/Collab

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BENJI’S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Judy, I am forever grateful for your inspiration and love. You were, are, and continue to be the number one model of what is possible when it comes to being a YouTuber. Thank you for all you’ve done and have shown me is possible with this amazing platform called YouTube.

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SEAN'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Steve Jobs said, "Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people." I believe that is true in life as well, so as we publish our first major business book, it's especially important that I acknowledge the team that I value most in the world—starting with my amazing wife, Sonja. Thank you for your love, support and sacrifice on the journey of building our business together. I also want thank my parents, Phil, Susan, and John; my step-brother Allen Eskelin; and my extended family. I am who I am today because of your love, wisdom, prayers, generosity, and encouragement. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I also believe that mentorship is the key to extraordinary success. I want to thank Jeff Moors for getting me started in video production back in 2003 and helping me grow as a leader. Thank you Chalene and Bret Johnson for believing in me and challenging me to go to another level. Thank you David and Alice Goldstein for your wisdom and encouragement. To all the friends, teachers, pastors, bosses, and coworkers over the last fifteen-plus years, thank you for your influence on my life.

I also need to acknowledge some mentors who have coached me through books and content: Gary Vaynerchuk, James Wedmore, Lewis Howes, Brendon Burchard, and John Maxwell—just to name a few.

A huge shout-out to the THiNK Media Team for your support, and thank you to Heather Torres for believing in our vision and being the glue that holds things together.

Thank you Benji Travis for your friendship and partnership in Video Influencers, and thank you to Gabby Arciniega for serving the Influencer's community over the last three years by helping us pump out consistent content.

I want to thank the entire team at Scribe for making this book a reality, and I would also be remiss not to acknowledge and thank the founders and team at YouTube. You have shaped history and given creators like us a platform to reach the world.

Finally, I want to thank God for the gift of life and salvation. I recognize that apart from Him, I can do nothing. *Soli Deo gloria*.

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FREE ONLINE VIDEO TRAINING WITH SEAN & BENJI

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Get FREE access at videoinfluencers.com/secrets.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

BENJI TRAVIS is a Family Man, YouTuber and Business Owner. He's surpassed over 1 billion video views through his channels and has experience building successful businesses on YouTube during his 10 years on the platform. In addition to these entrepreneurial ventures, he and his wife (who is also a successful YouTuber) have been able to raise over 1.2 Million dollars for charity utilizing live broadcasting strategies (including YouTube's Live platform) during the last three years. His latest venture "Video Influencers" is one of the leading online video tutorial channels where he shares strategies for growing his influence and income with online video.

SEAN CANNELL is the CEO of Think Media and co-founder of Video Influencers. He is one of today's leading online video experts and the world's most watched YouTube strategist. He has been featured on Social Media Examiner and Success.com, and the Video Influencers platform was listed in the Forbes "20 Must Watch YouTube Channels That Will Change Your Business." After growing a six-figure income as a "Tech YouTuber," he built a seven-figure online video education company that he still runs today. Sean is also international speaker, coach, and prolific content creator. He lives in Las Vegas with his wife Sonja and his two chihuahuas, Sophie and Rosie.

Meet him at SeanCannell.com.

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